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THE
PILLAR AND FOUNDATION
OF TRUTH.



BY
THE REV. J. B. PAGANI,
PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY.



PRIOR PARK.

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KENELM H. DIGBY, ESQ.

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BY GENUINE PIETY, SOLID LEARNING, AND

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OF THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE,

WITH SENTIMENTS OF THE HIGHEST ESTEEM,

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BY

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The substance of these Dialogues may be comprehended under the following heads:—

1. That Christ established in his Church a visible and infallible authority to preserve his doctrine, and teach it to mankind until the consummation of ages.

2. That such authority continues, and will continue for ever, in the Catholic Church.

For some passages interspersed in the following pages, the author acknowledges himself particularly indebted to DR. COOMBES' *Essence of Religious Controversy*.

Should these pages call forth animadversion, or elicit a reply from any quarter, nothing but solid reasoning will attract the author's notice.

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THE PILLAR AND FOUNDATION OF TRUTH.

FIRST DIALOGUE.

PROTESTANT.—Into what an abyss of darkness are men plunged in these days, trampling under foot the Gospel, and contemptuously rejecting the word of truth, under the specious pretext of following philosophy and adhering to the light of reason! They boast of worshipping God in spirit and truth, while they offer him in reality the greatest of all injuries, by despising his word and throwing off the yoke of his religion. What think you of such people? Whence trace you the origin of their infidelity?

CATHOLIC.—The characters of whom you speak are, I fear, unhappy victims of luxury and pride. Their infidelity is generally regarded as the offspring of passion, not of reason—of vanity, not of reflection. They boast strength of mind only to disguise the weakness of their hearts, and reject the belief of the gospel merely because they have not generosity to follow its maxims. The characters of Divinity which distinguish the Christian Religion, particularly on account of her wonderful propagation through all the world, notwithstanding the great difficulties arising from her mysteries, far above the reach of human reason, and her precepts directly opposed to human passions, are so conspicuous and penetrating, that it is necessary

to close our eyes against the light, not to be attracted by them.

PROTESTANT.—I am decidedly of your opinion. Alas! what a misfortune for such people to walk in darkness and in the shadow of death, deprived of that exceedingly great consolation which is experienced in the Redeemer: and, on the contrary, what felicity for us who believe in Christ, and thus share in all the manifold blessings flowing from thence!

CATHOLIC.—There is nothing, most assuredly, so excellent and sublime, or so connected with man's essential interests, as to believe truly in Christ, and follow his doctrine; because "there is no other name given to men whereby we must be saved but that of Jesus. We are not redeemed with corruptible things as gold and silver from the slavery of the princes of darkness, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled. He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works. He blotted out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, and has taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross. By him and through him we have been called from darkness to a wonderful light; from the state of children of wrath to that of children of love. He is the beloved Son of God, in whom our heavenly Father is well pleased: the Head of all principalities and powers, the King of Glory, the image of God, the figure of His substance. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, and are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: to him all power has been given in heaven and on earth. He is the expected of all nations, the teacher and legislator of all people, the model of all the elect, the way, the

truth and the life. He is our mediator and our advocate before the throne of God, whence he pours down upon us the most pure and saving streams of his graces. He is our greatest benefactor, our most amiable parent, our most affectionate Saviour. He is the source, in a word, of all our good, for he that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all—how has he not also with him given us all things?"

PROTESTANT.—Truly excellent! No one, I am persuaded, can entertain more beautiful or correct sentiments and feelings towards the Redeemer! That you are a most worthy Protestant is indisputable.

CATHOLIC.—Why style me Protestant, may I ask?

PROTESTANT.—For the best possible reason—the very fact of your thinking and speaking so well of the Redeemer.

CATHOLIC.—However you may deem the thinking and speaking well of our Redeemer essential to Protestantism, rest assured, my good friend, I am not a Protestant. I am a Catholic, thank God; and it is the Catholic Church which inspires me with the highest respect and love for our Redeemer. She teaches her children to acknowledge in Christ the eternal Word of God, who clothed himself with our mortality, and came into this world to promote the glory of his Father by the salvation of the souls of men: to cause the name of the true and living God to be praised, adored and sanctified by all the nations of the earth: to teach men to worship God in spirit and in truth: to destroy every greatness which should erect itself against

the Lord: to break in pieces every profane idol: to enchain every inordinate and rebellious passion: to exterminate sin, and to make righteousness take root, spring up, and flourish in the heart. It is she who teaches them that "the Lamb, that was slain, is worthy to receive power, and divinity and wisdom, and strength and honour, and glory and benediction" (*Apoc. x. 12*), and that, consequently, the highest possible tribute of love, and praise and adoration is due to him.

PROTESTANT.—Is it possible that you can be a Catholic? Are you taught by the Catholic Church to cherish so profound respect and deep veneration for our Redeemer? How you astonish me! But whatever be the case, I am particularly anxious to confer with you on the subject of religion, provided you feel no reluctance.

CATHOLIC.—Far from having any disinclination, I am, on the contrary, delighted with the proposal. The result of our conference will be, I trust, the glory of God and our real spiritual advantage. To facilitate the attainment of this end, we must understand the subject to be vitally interesting and of paramount importance, which, therefore, should be treated, not through curiosity, as not unfrequently occurs, nor with the spirit of contradiction to detect faults for the purpose of causing contention without any justifiable reason—but sincerely, and conscientiously making God himself the judge, and hence proposing for our sole undivided object the knowledge and discovery of his truth for our sanctification, his service and glory. By proceeding thus we shall induce God, as it were, to give us light, and guide him who strays into the path of truth.

PROTESTANT.—In all this I fully and unequivocally

cally concur ;—and, I assure you, nothing but the love of truth should ever induce me to propose any question, or to offer a single remark on this subject. With your permission, then, allow me the liberty of opening the conference, by asking you what is the principal feature or leading characteristic of the Catholic Church which distinguishes her, and wherein she differs from every other christian society? So numerous have been the marks of distinction applied to the Catholic Church, that I am absolutely perplexed to discover her principal characteristic.

CATHOLIC.—The peculiar characteristic of the Catholic Church, whence spring, as from their source, the various shining marks that distinguish her from other religious societies, is her adherence to that *visible-teaching* authority which Christ appointed in his Church to teach his heavenly doctrine to the faithful, and to guide them to eternal life. This is the grand characteristic, the bright luminous landmark of the Catholic Church, by which she is to be distinguished from every sect, and to be acknowledged as the immaculate spouse of the spotless Lamb.

PROTESTANT.—After calm, dispassionate and deliberate investigation, you will discover, if I mistake not, this character of your church to be grounded on a false supposition. Pray, point out the necessity of admitting a visible-teaching authority in the Church of Christ, since we possess that all-sacred deposit of faith, the holy scripture. Is not the holy scripture the inspired word of God? Does not God enlighten the minds of all who apply to him humbly and prayerfully, teaching and developing, by the divine spirit, the meaning of holy writ? Why, then, admit your visible-teaching authority in the Church of Christ?

CATHOLIC.—True it is, we have the holy scripture, which is the word of God, a word holy and adorable; but it is a word that may be fashioned and expounded according to fancy and caprice; a word, moreover, which is perpetually silent under every possibly conceived interpretation. When, therefore, difficulties and doubts arise, we require indubitably some external guide.

“It is asked,” says St. Vincent of Lerins, who flourished in the fifth century, “as the scripture is perfect, what necessity is there for authority in the Church? The reason is, because the scripture, being so profoundly deep, is not understood by all persons in the same sense, but *different persons explain it different ways*; so that *the variety of interpretations nearly equals the number of its readers*. Novatian interprets it in one sense, Photinus in another, Arius in a third, &c. Therefore, it is absolutely requisite that the true way of expounding the prophets and apostles be marked out, in conformity with the tradition of the Catholic Church. It never was, nor is, nor ever will be, lawful for christians to teach any doctrine except that which they have received; and it ever was, and is, and ever will be, their duty to condemn those who do otherwise. Do heretics, then, appeal to the scriptures? certainly; and this with the utmost confidence. You will see them running hastily through the different books of holy writ, those of Moses, Kings, the Psalms, the Gospels, &c. At home and abroad, in their discourses and in their writings, they hardly produce a sentence which is not larded with the words of scripture; but they are so much the more to be dreaded, as they conceal themselves under the covert of the divine laws. Let us, however, remember that satan transformed himself into an angel of light. If he could turn the scriptures against the Lord of Majesty, what use may he not make of them against us poor

mortals ! But if satan and his disciples, the heretics, are capable of thus perverting the holy scripture, how are Catholics, the children of the Church, to make use of them so as to discern truth from falsehood ? They must carefully observe the rule laid down at the beginning of this treatise by the holy and learned men I referred to : **THEY ARE TO INTERPRET THE DIVINE TEXT ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.**" (*Commonit. adv. Hæres.*)

If the established laws of the country, particularly those regarding property, were left to individual interpretation, what would be the inevitable consequence ? Would not the whole frame of civil society be forthwith convulsed, and its total subversion be the certain result of such a measure ? Has, then, the infinite wisdom of the Son of God, in order to give stability to his Church for ever, adopted a system which is calculated to fix an indelible mark of disgrace even on human legislation ? Impossible ; such an inference is repugnant to reason and common sense :—God has not so ordained. The Almighty, in his infinite wisdom, has appointed in his Church a visible and perpetual authority for teaching and explaining his heavenly doctrine to the faithful ; and this is a fact, which is incontestably evident, both from the holy scripture and the doctrine of the ancient Church, as will appear from the following statement :—

1. The church of the old testament was a figure of the new alliance, for the old law, as the apostle Paul tells us, "had but a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things." (*Heb. x. 1.*) Now, it is manifest from scripture, that the high priests of the old law were endued with divine authority to solve difficulties and decide questions of controversy arising amongst

the people, and that from their decision there was no appeal. "If thou perceive," said God to his people, "that there be among you a hard and doubtful matter in judgment between blood and blood, cause and cause, leprosy and leprosy: and thou see that the words of the judges within thy gates do vary: arise, and go up to the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. And thou shalt come to the priests of the Levitical race, and to the judge, that shall be at that time: and thou shalt ask of them, and they shall show thee the truth of the judgment. And thou shalt do whatsoever they shall say, that preside in the place which the Lord shall choose, and what they shall teach thee, according to his law; and thou shalt follow their sentence: neither shalt thou decline to the right hand nor to the left hand. But he that will be proud, and refuse to obey the commandment of the priest, who ministereth at that time to the Lord thy God, and the decree of the judge, that man shall die; and thou shalt take away the evil from Israel: and all the people hearing it shall fear, that no one afterwards swell with pride." (*Deut. xvii. 8-13.*) And, speaking through his prophets, the Lord said—"They (the priests) shall teach my people the difference between holy and profane.....and when there shall be a controversy, they shall stand in my judgments, and shall judge." (*Ezech. xlv. 23-24.*) "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth: because he is the Angel of the Lord of Hosts." (*Mal. ii. 7.*) Hence, Jesus Christ in the new testament, speaking to the multitude and to his disciples, said to them: "The scribes and the pharisees have sat on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, whatsoever they have said to you, observe and do." (*Matth. xxiii. 2-3.*) If, therefore, in the ancient Church, which was but a

figure of the new Church founded by Jesus Christ, there was an authority established by God for solving difficulties, and deciding subjects of controversy arising amongst the people, to which all the Jews were to be subject, not as being counseled so to do, but as being positively commanded, why not admit of a similar authority in the Church of Christ ?

2. Jesus Christ invested the pastors of his Church with illimited power of binding and loosing. "Thou art Peter," he said, addressing that apostle ; "and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (*Matth.* xvi. 18-19.) And, speaking to all the apostles, he said to them : "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven ; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (*Matth.* xviii. 18.) He, moreover, delivered to the pastors of his Church an ample commission of preaching his gospel to every living creature, assuring them of his assistance until the end of the world. "As the Father hath sent me," said he to his apostles, "I send you." (*John* xx. 21.) "Going therefore teach ye all nations : baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (*Matth.* xxviii. 19-20.) According to these words of our Redeemer, the pastors of his Church have been invested with illimited power, and appointed by him to be the guardians and teachers of his doctrine until the end of the world. But how could they exer-

cise such power and comply with this duty, were they not invested with authority to solve difficulties and to decide controversies concerning that sacred deposit which has been intrusted to them? Does not the charge of preserving and teaching the doctrine of Christ include that of explaining it when it is misunderstood, and of obliging the faithful to hear and follow such explanations?

3. The pastors of the Church, from the very nature of their office, contract a special obligation of feeding and ruling the faithful intrusted to their care. "Feed my lambs," said Christ to Peter; "feed my sheep." (*John xxi. 15-17.*) "Take heed to yourselves," says St. Paul, "and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (*Acts xx. 28.*) Now, what does this charge of feeding and ruling the faithful imply, but that the pastors of the Church of Christ are authorized by him to deliver his doctrine to the faithful, which is indeed a sacred and heavenly food, and to guide them through the path-way of this transient existence to endless felicity?

4. According to Christ's own promise, the pastors of his Church know all truth, and will be assisted by the Holy Ghost until the end of the world. "I will ask the Father," said Christ to his apostles, "and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever....The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." (*John xiv. 16-26.*) "He will teach you all truth." (*xvi. 13.*) Now, for what purpose are such pastors enlightened and assisted by the

Holy Ghost to know all truth, unless they be invested with divine authority over the faithful in matters of faith?

5. We are obliged, by Christ, to believe what the pastors of his Church teach us, under pain of eternal damnation, according to those words of Christ: "Going, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand....And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words: going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Amen, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment than for that city." (*Matth. x. 7-14-15.*) "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be condemned." (*Mark xvi. 15-16.*) Hence, St. John, in his first epistle, considers submission to the pastors of the Church as a mark of distinction between the spirit of truth and of error, and as a clear sign of our belonging to God. "We are of God," he says. "He that knoweth God heareth us. He that is not of God, heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." (*1 John iv. 6.*) Now, does not such obligation imply that the pastors of the Church are authorized by Christ to declare his doctrine to the faithful, and that the faithful are obliged to follow their direction?

6. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, says that God "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God

into a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ: that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive." (*Ephes. iv. 11-14.*) But how could the pastors confirm the faithful in faith, were they not authorized by Christ to judge and decide controversies touching faith? How could the faithful be confirmed by the pastors were they not obliged to follow their decisions?

7. The same apostle, in the first epistle to Timothy, calls the Church of God "the pillar and foundation of truth." (*iii. 15.*) Upon her, therefore, devolve the office and prerogative of directing the faithful in the path of truth, and, consequently, of removing their doubts and deciding all questions on matters of faith.

8. The pastors of the Church of Christ, according to the holy scriptures, are the Angels of God, who are to make known to us his law. "I preached the gospel to you heretofore," says St. Paul; "...and you received me as an Angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." (*Gal. iv. 13-14.*) They are, moreover, the ambassadors of Christ, sent by him to declare to us his will and reconcile us with God. "For Christ, therefore," says St. Paul, "we are ambassadors; God, as it were, exhorting by us. For Christ, we beseech you, be reconciled to God." (*2 Cor. v. 20.*) They are also the organs of Christ, by whom he speaks to us. "He that heareth you," says Christ to his apostles, "heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." (*Luke x. 16.*) To them, therefore, it belongs to teach the faithful the word of eternal salvation, and to determine all points appertaining to the deposit of faith.

9. Jesus Christ ordains, in the gospel, that incorrigible brethren be denounced to the Church, and in case they refuse to hear her, that they be looked upon as heathens and publicans. "If thy brother shall offend against thee," says he, "go, and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more: that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear them: tell the Church. And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." (*Matth. xviii. 15-18.*) Whoever deeply considers these words of our Redeemer, will not be surprised that Catholics lay great stress upon them; for how could the faithful be obliged under the severest penalties to hear the Church, were she not endued with divine authority to instruct and direct them? Why are they who refuse to hear the Church to be considered as heathens and publicans, but for having shaken off, by such an act, the yoke of legitimate authority?

10. Christ's Church is described by the prophets and evangelists as a great kingdom, a universal empire. (*Ps. xxi. lxxi. ; Luke i. 32-33.*) Now, does not a kingdom imply a sovereign, a code of laws and an authority to enforce its observance, explain its meaning, and decide all questions that may arise relative to it?

11. In the Church of Christ there must be a supernatural means for teaching his supernatural doctrines to the people; because they are to be saved by believing and following them. This supernatural means cannot be the supernatural light of the Holy Ghost communicated immediately to individuals; 1st, because, in this case,

it were useless for Christ to send his apostles to preach the gospel all over the world, and for the apostles to comply with this injunction; *2dly*, because men would be acquainted with the doctrines of the Christian religion, independently of any exterior influence, that is, without having heard any thing about them, which is clearly not the case. Neither can any writing be such supernatural means; *1st*, because no writing can be known as containing the divine word, and, consequently, as invested with divine authority, independently of the supernatural testimony of God, or of those who are enlightened by God; therefore, the knowledge of any book, as divinely inspired, is posterior to the knowledge of a speaking-supernatural authority, by which we are assured that it really contains the word of God; *2dly*, because every writing is a silent teacher, which cannot of itself explain the true meaning of its words when we do not understand them. Where, then, is this supernatural means to be found? Consider this point well, and you will see that such means cannot be found, but in a visible teaching authority assisted by the supernatural light of God. "How, then," asks the apostle Paul, "shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear, without a preacher? And how shall they preach, unless they be sent?...Faith then cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (*Rom. x. 14-18.*) In fact, if you trace on your atlas every portion of the world which has at any period been favoured with the light of christianity, you will find the grand and splendid work of the conversion of nations, from their evil ways to the path of truth, invariably carried into effect by the ministry of an eternal teaching authority particularly assisted by God.

12. In the Church of Christ there must be a sure means for preserving the integrity and purity of her doctrines, this being absolutely necessary for the attainment of her end, which is to bring mankind to salvation by believing and practising them. And as such a means must be proportionate to the nature of those doctrines which are to be preserved, it is clear that it must be supernatural. Now, where shall we find such a means? Not in any writing, for the above stated reasons, and also because no writing may decide on those questions which arise amongst parties concerning points of doctrine which it contains; not in private judgment, because this judgment is the source of numberless dissensions on the most essential points of faith, which are diametrically opposite to the integrity and purity of christian doctrine. It is, therefore, to be found in the teaching authority of the pastors assisted by the Holy Ghost, because this authority only can exact obedience from christians in matters of faith, and thus preserve amongst them pure and immaculate the doctrine of Christ.

13. In the Church of Christ there must be only one faith. "I...beseech you," says St. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, "that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called....careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (iv. 1-5.) But how is such unity of faith possible, unless there be in the Church an external and living authority for explaining to the faithful the real doctrines of Christ, and deciding their controversies on this subject?

"A very excellent and elegant christian writer, admiring the excellence of the truths of christianity, and observing that many millions of men, of different dispositions, conditions and nations, were

united in the uniform belief of the *same* doctrines proposed this question to himself,—‘Why none of the schools of the ancient philosophers had ever succeeded in bringing the world to the knowledge of such sublime and interesting truths?’ He answered the question by saying, that there was not, in the first place, any one of the schools of the philosophers who knew these truths; consequently, that they could not teach them to others; secondly, that if there had been any philosopher so happy as to have obtained the knowledge of these sublime doctrines, yet he would not have had sufficient authority over the judgments of other men to bring them to the belief of what he taught. The method of teaching such doctrines by discussion and scientific demonstration would have been useless, especially with regard to the great bulk of mankind. Nor would he have had any better prospect of success with the learned; for, according to the different views they might take of the same question, they would come to different conclusions upon it; and one learned man would be apt to think his own judgment as good as that of another. In fact, each sect of philosophers has maintained its own peculiar doctrine concerning truth and happiness; but no one sect could ever bring the others or the world to the belief of its own tenets.

“But after philosophy had given proof of its contradictions, of its folly and weakness; behold! a teacher of a different character appears; and, by his method of teaching, soon unites the world in the uniform belief of the same sublime doctrines. Christ appears on earth. He announces that he is *sent from God* to teach truth and the way of happiness to men. He proclaims that he is the Son of God, full of truth and grace. He proves the divinity of his mission, and his right to the title he claimed, by the most evident miracles, which carry irresistible conviction to the mind.

“With this established character he taught his doctrines; not by discussion, but by authority. ‘The people were in admiration of his doctrine. For he was teaching them, *as one having power.*’ (Matth. vii. 28-29.) He delivered them *as the word of God.* This was the strongest motive and evidence of truth that could be proposed to the mind of man.

“Christ communicated the whole body of his doctrines to his apostles. He commanded them to teach all nations what they had heard from him. He commanded them to teach his doctrines, not by discussion, but by authority. In order to establish the credit of their authority, he gave them power to work miracles, as convincing proofs that they were instructed and commissioned by him. The apostles taught the doctrines of Christ, not as their own discoveries or inventions, but as the word of God (1 *Thess.* ii. 13) which they had received from him. The world received them as such. Thus, what the wisdom of philosophy could never do, the foolishness of the gospel has effected. It has brought the world to the unity of truth and to the true way to happiness.” (Bp. Poynter’s *Christianity*, part ii. chap. 5.)

14. If we consult the earliest monuments of christian antiquity, we cannot entertain a shadow of doubt concerning such authority. St. Irenæus, who flourished in the second century, emphatically affirms, that “in explaining the scriptures christians are to attend to the pastors of the Church, who, by the ordinance of God, have received the inheritance of truth with the succession of their sees.” (*Adv. Hæres.* lib. iv. c. 43.) In another place he says: “To him that believeth that there is one God, and holds to the head, which is Christ, to this man all things will be plain, if he read

diligently the scripture, with the aid of those who are the priests in the Church, and in whose hands, as we have shown, rests the doctrine of the apostles." (*ibid.* lib. iv. c. 52.) Origen, one of the most learned men, who lived in the third century of the christian era, writes thus: "To me it is good to adhere to apostolic men as to God and his Christ, and to draw intelligence from the scriptures according to the sense that has been delivered by them. If we follow the mere letter of the scriptures, and take the interpretation of the law as the Jews commonly explain it, I shall blush to confess that the Lord should have given such laws. But if the law of God be understood as the Church teaches, then truly does it transcend all human laws, and is worthy of him who gave it." (*Homil. vii in Levit. t. ii.*) St. Cyprian, a great ornament of the same century, in his treatise on the unity of the Church, writes as follows: "Men are exposed to error, because they turn not their eyes to the fountain of truth; nor is the head sought for, nor the doctrine of the Heavenly Father upheld. Which things, would any one seriously ponder, no long inquiry would be necessary. The proof is easy. Christ addresses Peter: 'I say to thee, thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.' And again, after his resurrection, he said to him: 'Feed my sheep.'....He that does not hold this unity of the Church, can he think that he holds the faith? He that opposes and withstands the Church, can he trust that he is in the Church?" St. Jerome, in the fourth century, thus addresses the Luciferians: "To tell you briefly and plainly the sentiments of my soul, we must live and die in that Church which, having been founded by the apostles, subsists to this day; but if in any place you hear that some are called christians, taking a

name not from our Lord Jesus Christ, but from some other, as Marcionites, Valentinians, Mountaineers, Field-Conventiclers, know that such form not the Church of Christ, but a synagogue of anti-christ....Let them not flatter themselves that they quote the scriptures for their tenets, since the devil also quoted scripture; which consists not in the reading, but in the right understanding." The great St. Augustine, who flourished in the beginning of the fifth century, speaks in the same manner. "To attain to the truth of the scriptures," he says, "we must follow the sense of them received by the Church, to which the scriptures themselves bear testimony. True it is the scriptures themselves cannot deceive us; nevertheless, to prevent our being deceived in the question we examine by them, it is necessary we should advise with that Church which these certainly and evidently point out to us." (lib. i. *contra Crescon.*) "This (the unlawfulness of rebaptizing heretics) is not evidently read either by you or by me; nevertheless, if there were any wise man, to whom Christ has borne testimony, and whom he had appointed to be consulted on the question, we could not fail to do so. Now Christ bears this testimony to his Church. Whoever, therefore, refuses to follow the practice of the Church, resists Christ himself, who by his testimony recommends this Church." (*De Util. Credend.*)

15. This power of teaching and judging in matters of faith, which was given by Christ to the apostles and their lawful successors, has been exercised by them in every age.

Immediately after having received the Holy Ghost, the apostles, filled with heavenly fire, boldly left their concealment, and in loud accents proclaimed the wondrous things of God.

Peter, the first of their number, standing forth the champion of truth, brought, in two discourses, not less than eight thousand souls to the fold of Christ. Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and barbarians, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, all were obliged to submit to the authority of the apostles for attaining eternal salvation, for the Lord added daily to their society "such as should be saved." (*Acts* ii. 47.) When forbidden by the priests and rulers to teach any more in the name of Jesus Christ, the apostles appealed to their divine mission, saying: "If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (*Acts* iv. 18-20.) When amongst the faithful at Antioch there arose the famous controversy respecting the observance of legal ceremonies, the apostles assembled together at Jerusalem to decide upon it. In this assembly they decided the question by saying: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no farther burden upon you than these necessary things," &c. (*Acts* xv. 28.) In the same chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we read, that the apostle St. Paul went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, "commanding them to keep the precepts of the apostles and the ancients." (v. 41.)

That the successors of the apostles have exercised this power of teaching and deciding controversies on religious subjects, is a fact confirmed by the history of all ages. Even in the first centuries, which are regarded by Protestants as the golden age of Christianity, several general councils were held, in which the pastors of the Church, assisted the Holy Ghost, declared what was the doctrine of Christ, decided controversies in matters of faith, and obliged the faithful to follow their decisions, under pain of being looked upon as heathens and publicans.

It is then clear, from the holy scripture, as well as from the testimony of antiquity, that in the Church of God there was always a visible and living authority, to which submission was due. Before the Son of God appeared amongst us by his incarnation, that authority was in the synagogue. When the synagogue was on the eve of falling, Jesus Christ himself, who is the eternal wisdom, appeared amongst us. When that divine being withdrew, he left a body of pastors and doctors in the persons of his apostles, and their lawful successors in the ministry, until the end of the world, and with them his Holy Spirit.

This authority, with which the apostles and their lawful successors are invested, interferes not in the least degree with Christ's authority over his Church, because it proceeds from him, and tends to his glory. "All obedience to man," says Jeremy Taylor, who is considered by Protestants as one of the brightest ornaments of the English Church, "is for God's sake; for God, imprinting his authority upon the sons of men, like the sun reflecting upon a cloud, produces a parhelion, or a representation of his own glory.....It is the divine authority, though chartered upon a piece of clay, and imprinted upon a weak and imperfect man." Hence St. Paul says: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and subject yourselves to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls." (*Hebr. xiii. 17.*) "Let every soul be subject to higher powers: for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation." (*Rom. xiii. 1-2.*)

If, then, any one ask how he is to learn with absolute certainty what are the doctrines of faith which Christ revealed, and which he commanded all to believe—what are the precepts of super-

natural morality which Christ delivered, and which he commanded all to observe—what are the sacred rites and ordinances, which Christ instituted as the means of imparting the grace of justification to men—what are the dispositions and conditions which Christ prescribed for attaining eternal salvation through him—it is clear and certain that, by the ordinance of Christ himself, all these things are to be learnt with absolute certainty from the testimony of the *pastors of his Church*, whom he has appointed to teach these important truths of religion to all mankind, and whom he has promised to direct and assist at all times, in the discharge of their duties.

PROTESTANT.—With respect to the apostles, I readily admit that there was a strict obligation of adhering to and following their doctrines. But how prove you that there is the same obligation towards their successors in the ministry? It appears to me that very forcible reasons may be adduced to prove the contrary. The apostles, having received the doctrine of truth immediately from God, were to be heard and obeyed in all things relative to faith equally with God himself. Since, however, the doctrine of truth was written under divine inspiration, the pastors of the Church are to be heard and obeyed only as much as they teach and command in conformity with the holy scripture. Hence Protestants so often and so justly complain of the unfairness of Catholics in confounding the apostles with the subsequent ministers of the gospel.

CATHOLIC.—As the doctrines of Christ change not their nature on account of their being written, but are always the same, so not less unchangeable is that authority which Christ established in his Church for propagating such doctrines, and pre-

serving them from all corruption whatsoever until the consummation of ages.

"The apostles had no power, but such as they received from Christ; no security against error, but such as they derived from his guidance and protection. Now, the same power, the same guidance and protection, were promised to the successors of the apostles, as were promised to the apostles themselves. Christ did not send to the apostles 'the spirit of truth to teach them all truth' (*John* xvi. 13) only for a limited time, but 'for ever.' (*John* xiv. 16.) He did not promise to be himself with the apostles merely during their short lives, but 'all days even to the consummation of the world.' (*Matth.* xxviii. 20.) Therefore, the same submission is due to the lawful successors of the apostles in the first, the second, and the nineteenth century of christianity, as was due to the apostles themselves. Where does scripture teach that the doctrines of the apostles should be received, and those of their successors rejected? Where does it teach that, after the death of the apostles, the commission to teach mankind should be translated from the living pastors of the Church to the dead letter of the Bible? Where does it recall the solemn denunciation pronounced against those 'who refuse to hear the Church'? (*Matth.* xviii. 17.) Where does it retract the promised guidance of the spirit, and the pledged protection of Christ?" (Dr. Baines' *Sermon on Faith, Hope and Charity.*)

The supposition that any thing can ever be taught by the pastors of the Church in opposition to the holy scripture, is most absurd and injurious to Christ, who, in the clearest terms, promised to them his assistance and the light of his Holy Spirit until the end of the world. Moreover, under such supposition, every individual would be entitled, not only to examine the doctrine of his

pastors as to its conformity, or non-conformity with the holy scripture, but authorized also to reject it as false and erroneous on its appearing to him opposed to holy writ: and thus the authority, which Christ conferred on his Church to judge her children, and pronounce a sentence of condemnation against them in case of disobedience in following her direction, would be vested in every individual against the Church: the charge which Christ gave to the pastors of his Church, to confirm the faithful in truth, lest they should be carried to and fro with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, instead of being intrusted exclusively to them, would be transferred to the faithful against their pastors: which consequences are certainly manifest and glaring absurdities.

No. The spirit of the Church of Christ is not a spirit of confusion and falsehood, but of unity and truth—to secure which to her, until the consummation of ages, Christ established that visible teaching authority, which the documents of the holy scripture, as well as those of christian antiquity, point out in her pastors. The apostles were commissioned by Christ himself to undertake the office of teaching his doctrine to the people, and of preserving it from every species of corruption. According to the commission received from Christ, the apostles, as we read in their Acts, appointed men over different churches, with apostolical authority to preside during their absence, and succeed them after their decease: which their successors have done until this period, and will continue to do uninterruptedly and unchangeably until the consummation of ages. They who adhere to this authority are by the very fact secured, and founded in the unity of truth: whereas they who shake off its yoke are unavoidably plunged into the gulph of error and confusion.

SECOND DIALOGUE.

PROTESTANT.—By admitting a similar authority to that of Catholics, I should apprehend the danger of preferring man to God, and of believing in the doctrine of man instead of adhering to that of God.

CATHOLIC.—There is no foundation whatever for this apprehension, because the authority, with which the pastors of the Church of Christ are invested, is supernatural and divine, proceeding from God, and tending to his glory. The act, it should be observed, by which we adhere to such authority, is an act of faith in the veracity of God, and of subjection to his authority communicated to men. It is also an act of great security for believing the true doctrine of God, because Christ, having appointed such authority to disseminate his doctrine amongst the people, and to preserve it pure and undefiled until the consummation of ages, and having promised her his assistance, and the light of his Holy Spirit until the end of the world, all those who adhere to her are secure from every danger of error.

But that you may the better understand what is the Catholic doctrine on this subject, I will call your attention to what follows :—

1. The object of our faith is whatever is contained in the revelation of God; for whatever has been revealed by God, is to be looked upon as the divine word, and, consequently, as the object of our faith.

2. The foundation of our faith is the authority

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of God; because the formal motive by which we are moved to give assent to what is contained in the revelation of God, is the infinite veracity of him from whom revelation proceeds.

3. What is contained in the revelation of God, and to be believed on divine authority, is proposed to us by the ministry of the Church of Christ, which is "the pillar and foundation of truth," namely, by the body of her pastors; for to them Christ committed the deposit of his sacred doctrines, to be proposed to the people, and preserved in its purity, through his assistance and the light of his Holy Spirit, even to the end of the world. Hence, what constitutes any point of doctrine an article of faith, is the fact of the same being revealed by God; and we know what is revealed by God through the ministry of his Church.

4. The Church of Christ proposes to us the holy scripture and divine tradition as the revelation of God, which has been partly written by some of her children, directed by supernatural light, and partly transmitted down, by oral tradition, from age to age. Hence, whatever is contained in the holy scripture, and divine tradition, is to be regarded as matter of faith, and to be believed on the authority of God, who was pleased to reveal it to man.

5. It sometimes happens that the faithful, through their own fault, and not that of the Church (which cannot deviate from truth), misunderstand what she proposes to them. The Church, then, conformably to the injunction received from Christ of teaching, explains to the faithful that very doctrine which she had previously proposed to them.

6. If the explanations of the Church, touching sacred scripture and divine tradition, become themselves a subject of controversy, and of conflicting opinions amongst the faithful, she then explains her own explanations, because she is, and will be until the end of the world, a *living and speaking authority*.

7. Should there be amongst the faithful some who wilfully refuse to hear the Church, and to follow her direction, either when she proposes what is contained in the revelation of God, or when she explains it, or expounds such explanations, they cease from that moment being members of her body, and, according to the injunction of Christ, are to be regarded by her children as heathens and publicans.

From these points, which you will find held invariably by Catholics as so many principles of their Church, the following assertions, uttered and believed by many Protestants, will most manifestly appear gross, palpable, flagrant calumny.

1. "Catholics attribute to their Church an authority injurious to God." How can that be injurious to God, which he himself has appointed to be the means adopted for announcing his doctrine to the people, and preserving it uncontaminated, spotless, and holy until the end of the world? The source more calculated to prove injurious to the Lord, would be, I presume, the principle of private interpretation held by Protestants; which, delivering the word of God to individuals of every class, for the purpose of allowing them to draw thence a regular system of faith and morality, generates endless controversies, which must necessarily extinguish the light of truth, spread darkness around, and substitute in lieu of pure unchange-

able truth, the devices of human ingenuity, or the absurdity of caprice. For a satisfactory proof of this assertion, I refer you to the events which have marked the progress of Protestantism in every country where it has prevailed, and to the transactions which have been daily passing before our eyes. To what cause are we to ascribe the marked diversity of thinking on every point, which distinguished the first reformers? How are we to account for the consequent extravagance of religious sentiments, and the general corruption of morals, which excited horror even in the breast of Luther? To what source are we to trace the unparalleled excesses of the Anabaptists of Germany—the violence of the Calvinists of France—the phrenzy of the Presbyterians of Scotland—the fury of the Puritans of England,—but to the unlimited licence of rejecting all religious subordination, and of sanctioning their excesses by their own interpretation of the written word? The countless variety of sects, exhibiting a dark catalogue of the most extravagant opinions, from the era termed the Reformation to the present period, can be traced, in the estimation of thinking men, only to this fatal cause.

When questions arise amongst Catholics concerning points of faith, the pastors of the Church fail not to examine them by the received rule of faith, and to pronounce, if expedient, an authoritative decision upon them. The dispute is thus terminated; for if any one refuse to hear the Church, he is of course considered “as a heathen and a publican.” But dissensions amongst Protestants must be irremediable and perpetual, from the fundamental law of private judgment. Hence, while Catholics have no apprehensions on their faith, which is clear to them, other christians, who follow their own fluctuating opinions, are carried away by every wind

of doctrine, and not unfrequently disturbed by dreadful misgivings concerning the safety of the path they tread.

Tell me not that every Bible-reader knows the truth, provided he read it in a proper manner; because it is groundless, and contrary to what experience continually teaches us, in the case of so many Protestants, who all desire to know the truth; all read incessantly the sacred records, all pray for the teaching of the spirit, and still they do not agree in the most essential points of faith. Thus, after a long perusal of the holy scripture, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is an error according to the conscientious Socinian; so is Baptism and the Lord's Supper to the scrupulous mind of the Quaker.

2. "Catholics entertain higher veneration for the doctrine of their Church than for the holy scripture." How can this be reconciled; scripture itself being, according to Catholics, the doctrine of their Church, which she proposes to them as containing the divine word?

3. "The Catholic Church, in her councils, forms new articles of faith." The Catholic Church makes no innovation in matters of faith, but only explains to the faithful what she has already proposed to them as doctrine of faith, and which they misunderstand, owing to their fallibility. Those points of faith, which have been declared in several general councils, are as ancient as the Church of Christ, who delivered them to the apostles, and through them to their successors; and which successors will continue so to do until the end of the world. Merely a declaration of them was repeated by the Church, which, assisted by the Holy Ghost, agreeably to the

promises of Christ, explains what was entrusted to her by our Redeemer.

4. "The Catholic Church is an enemy to the reading and circulating of the holy scripture." The reverse is the simple truth. No; the Catholic Church never forbade or discouraged the reading and circulating of authentic copies of the sacred scripture. She binds her clergy to the daily recital of the canonical office, which comprises a large portion of the sacred volume, and to read and expound to the faithful, in the vernacular tongue, on Sundays, the epistle and gospel of the day, or some other portion of the divine law. As to the translations of the holy scripture; there never was a general law of the Catholic Church prohibiting the reading of them; but, considering that many have perverted, through ignorance or malice, the meaning of the sacred text to their own destruction, the Catholic Church requires that none should be put into the hands of the faithful, unless such as are acknowledged, by ecclesiastical authority, to be accurate, and conformable to the sense of the original.

The following address of Pius VI. to the most Rev. Anthony Martini, archbishop of Florence, on his translation of the Holy Bible into Italian, shows how much the Catholic Church desires that her children should apply themselves to the reading of the holy scripture:—"At a time," he says, "that a vast number of bad books, which grossly attack the Catholic religion, are circulated even among the unlearned, to the great destruction of souls, you judge exceedingly well that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the holy scriptures; for those are the most abundant sources, which ought to be left open to every one, to draw from

them purity of morals and of doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times. This you have seasonably effected, as you declare, by publishing the sacred writings in the language of your country suitable to every one's capacity : especially when you show and set forth that you have added explanatory notes, which, being extracted from the holy Fathers, preclude every possible danger of abuse." (Dated 1st April 1778.)

Pope Pius VII., in a rescript dated 13th April 1823, addressed to the Vicars-Apostolic in England, earnestly exhorts them to confirm the people committed to their spiritual care in faith and good works ; and, for that end, to encourage them to read books of pious instruction, and particularly the holy scriptures, in translations approved by ecclesiastical authority ; because, to those who are well disposed, nothing can be more useful, more consoling, or more animating, than the reading of the holy scriptures, understood in their true sense. They serve to confirm the faith, support the hope, and inflame the charity of the true christian.

Hence, all the charges which Protestants allege against Catholics on this subject,—as, for instance that they contradict the doctrine of Christ, who exhorted the Jews to read the holy scripture, from these texts : " Search the scriptures....because they bear testimony of me," (*John* v. 39) ; " Search the scriptures and see," &c. (*John* vii. 52),—rest on no other basis than ignorance and misrepresentation.

5. " Catholics, following the explanation of their Church concerning the holy scripture, prefer the doctrine of man to that of God." How can this be accredited, since such explanations emanate from an authority assisted continually by Christ, and enlightened by the Holy Ghost, in proposing

and declaring to the people the real doctrine of God? It should be especially observed, that the explanations given by the Church concerning the word of God, are no other than the word of God explained; consequently, adherence to such explanations is unequivocally and positively nothing less than adherence to the word of God.

PROTESTANT.—The principle of the Catholic Church relative to divine tradition, is, in my opinion, most shallow and inconsistent: for how can she, holding such a principle, be perfectly pure in her doctrine? Does not this system open a vast extensive field for change and novelty of every description? Can a doctrine be transmitted by oral tradition from generation to generation, century after century, without undergoing considerable alterations? This point, touching divine tradition, must be very perplexing, I imagine, to Catholics.

CATHOLIC.—The principle of divine tradition, held by the Catholic Church, is precisely the system which divine providence pursued in imparting to the world the inestimable benefit of divine revelation. Through what medium were the doctrines of God concerning the Redeemer, and other points of faith, transmitted in each succeeding age from Adam to Moses? By means of the holy scripture? Most assuredly not; for it is a fact, attested by all christianity, that Moses was the first scripture writer. How, then, was such doctrine transmitted during the lapse of nearly 2400 years, which intervened between Adam (who received it immediately from God) and Moses? Undoubtedly through the medium of oral tradition. Thus Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and other holy people, who are described in the holy scripture as having

the true faith and being distinguished for sanctity, learnt the fall of Adam, the promised redemption by the future Messiah, the remedy from sin by penance and repentance, the reward of virtue and the punishment of crime.

By what means became the generality of the Jews, from the captivity of Babylon until the coming of Christ, acquainted with the doctrine of God regarding the Redeemer, and other tenets of faith? By perusing the Holy Bible? Most certainly not; for the generality of them lost, during the Babylonish captivity, the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, in which the old scripture was written, and became acquainted with the Syriac language, which differs as much from Hebrew, as Italian from Latin: it is well known, on the other hand, that the Bible was not translated into the Syriac language until some years after our Saviour's death. How, then, were the Jews instructed in the doctrine of God for the space of fourteen generations, which passed from the captivity of Babylon to the coming of Christ, in which they understood the Bible no more than Italians understand it in Latin? Evidently by means of oral tradition, and particularly by hearing those whom God appointed to sit on the chair of Moses.

Through what medium did the apostles propagate the doctrine of Christ over so many countries? Through what medium did multitudes of various nations become acquainted with the gospel-law? Through the medium of the holy scripture? Impossible; for before the written word contained in the new testament was published, the pastors of the Church of Christ had, by his authority, propagated the faith through all the world, and the faithful placed unlimited confidence in the testimony of that Church, which, agreeably to the doctrine of Christ, was to teach all truth until the end of the

world. St. Paul is an unexceptionable voucher of this fact; for, in the year 38 of the Christian era, when he wrote his epistle to the Romans, he testifies that their faith was spoken of over the whole world. (*Rom.* i. 8.) When, at length, the scriptures were written, they consisted of occasional compositions, arising from adventitious circumstances, without any visible design of conveying to the faithful, in written records, any regular system of faith and morality. Christians had still to depend on the testimony and the authority of their Church. In those days of primitive fervour, the votaries of religion asked not what was written, but what was taught and delivered.

This system of divine tradition, held by the Catholic Church, far from being contrary to scripture and to the doctrine of the ancient Church, is undoubtedly grounded on both. St. Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, thus expresses himself: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." (*2 Thess.* ii. 14.) And, writing to Timothy, he says,—“The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to those faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.” (*2 Tim.* ii. 2.)

St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who flourished in the first century, in his journey to Rome, where he was sentenced to be devoured by wild beasts, exhorted the christians who obtained access to him, “to guard themselves against the rising heresies, and to adhere with the utmost firmness to the tradition of the apostles.” (*Euseb. Hist.* lib. iii. c. 30.) St. Irenæus, whose martyrdom took place in the year 202, judiciously exclaims—“Should a dispute arise on the slightest question, would it not become a duty to recur to the most ancient churches, where the apostles

lived? And if the apostles had left no written word, would it not be a matter of conscientious obligation to follow the tradition which they left with those to whom they confided the care of the churches? It is this ordinance of tradition which many nations of barbarians, believing in Christ, follow, without the use of letter, or ink." (*Adversus Hæres.* lib. iii. cap. 4.) In another place he says, that "nothing is easier to those who seek for the truth, than to remark in every church the tradition which the apostles have manifested to all the world." (*ibid.* lib. iii. c. 5.)

Tertullian, who wrote in the third century, proves at great length the absolute necessity of admitting tradition, no less than scripture, as the word of God, inasmuch as many important points which he mentions cannot be proved without it. (*De Corona Milit.*) Amongst the numerous and illustrious witnesses of the fourth age, St. Basil and St. Epiphanius deserve particular notice. The former says—"There are many doctrines preserved and preached in the Church derived partly from written documents, partly from *apostolical tradition*, which have equally the same force in religion, and which no one contradicts who has the least knowledge of the christian laws." (lib. *de Spiritu Sancto.*) The latter says, with equal force and gravity—"We must make use of tradition; for all things are not to be found in scripture." (*De Hæres.* No. 61.) St. John Chrysostom, who flourished at the beginning of the fifth century, in his commentary on the passage of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, says—"Hence it is manifest, that they (the apostles) did not deliver all things by means of epistles, but that they made many communications without writing, and that both are equally entitled to credence. *It is a tradition, ask no farther.*" (*Hom. 4, on the second epistle to the*

Thessal. ii. 14.) Finally, St. Augustine, speaking on the question concerning the baptism of heretics, says—"The apostles, indeed, have prescribed nothing about this; but the custom must be considered as derived from their tradition, since there are many things observed by the Universal Church which are justly held to have been appointed by the apostles, though they are not written." (*De Bapt. contra Donat. lib. v.*)

Jesus Christ having entrusted his doctrine to the pastors of his Church, and promised to them the spirit of truth until the end of the world, it is impossible that, from the system of divine tradition held by the Catholic Church, any change or novelty should arise in matters of faith. By what means has the Church of Christ been preserved till now in her purity, notwithstanding the mighty efforts of the princes of darkness to destroy her? By what means has the holy scripture been kept uncorrupted through generations, although translated into different languages, and transmitted from one nation to another, century after century? Unquestionably by the work of him to whom all power was given in heaven and on earth. In support of divine tradition the same observations will be equally applicable. Our Lord promised his assistance to the pastors of his church, for the purpose of preserving the purity of his doctrine, whether written or unwritten, and in his promises never can he fail; for "heaven and earth shall pass, but his words shall not pass." (*Matth. xxiv. 35.*)

Independently of this reason, which is the substantial one, by which we are absolutely assured that the doctrine of Christ, whether written or unwritten, will be preserved in its purity until the end of the world, there are other reasons, which may be viewed as secondary, in favour of the preservation of divine tradition.

1. There are the writings of the holy Fathers, and other ecclesiastical men, in which divine traditions are contained.

2. The continual observance of several such traditions in the whole Church; as, for instance, baptism administered to children before they attain the use of reason, the matter and form of certain sacraments, &c.

3. Several ancient monuments, which are to be found in the Catholic Church from time immemorial; as, for instance, the most ancient temples containing altars, crosses, images, &c.

4. The uninterrupted exertions of the pastors of the Catholic Church, opposing contemporary heresies by the doctrine of Christ, either written or unwritten.

PROTESTANT.—By the Redeemer so severely reprimanding the Jews (*Matth.* xv. 1-10; *Mark* vii. 5-14) for having made void the word of God through their traditions, was not a sentence of condemnation pronounced against all those who admit traditional doctrines in matters of faith?

CATHOLIC.—The traditional doctrines held by the Catholic Church in matters of faith, are not to be confounded with human traditions, as were those which Christ reprimanded in the Jews, because the former proceed not from human authority, but from God himself, who entrusted them to the apostles, and through them to their successors in the ministry. Let it ever be remembered, that the traditional doctrines of the Catholic Church in matters of faith are the very doctrines of Christ, transmitted down by oral tradition from age to age

through the instrumentality of the pastors of his Church, whom he has commanded to be heard and obeyed even as himself.

PROTESTANT.—I would propose a question—How am I to ascertain those points of doctrine which are really contained in divine tradition ?

CATHOLIC.—Divine tradition being a doctrine which God himself delivered to the apostles, and through the apostles transmitted to their successors, no point of doctrine, therefore, can belong to divine tradition, unless it had been universally and always believed in the Church of Christ, namely, from the apostles to the present time. Hence one great means for discovering divine tradition is, to find out those points of doctrine which are not contained in the holy scripture, and yet have been generally held at every period in the Church of Christ as matters of faith. "When we find any thing," says St. Augustine, "to be uniformly and universally observed by the Church in any part of the world, and cannot trace the origin of it to any ecclesiastical decree, we may conclude that it was derived by the Church from the very source of apostolical tradition." But if any question arise among the faithful on this subject, it devolves upon the pastors of the Church to declare what really has ever been universally believed as of faith, and what, consequently, constitutes a point of divine tradition. Thus acting, they are not directed by human wisdom, but by the light of the Holy Ghost, who, according to the promise of Christ, "will abide with them for ever." Thus the protracted and violent dispute concerning the baptism of heretics was finally adjusted by the Church, when she declared the validity of such baptism, as a point of divine tradition, in these

words:—"Let there be no innovation, but let what has been delivered be retained."

PROTESTANT.—What is, then, the rule of faith in the Catholic Church? Is it scripture, divine tradition, or the authority of the Church?

CATHOLIC.—The rule of faith in the Catholic Church is nothing else but the divine word, whether written or unwritten. True it is that such word is proposed to the faithful by the apostles and their lawful successors in the ministry; yet this, far from militating against the divine word, tends only to deliver it to the faithful quite pure and unchanged. As we say that the rule of civil acts is the law enacted by the king, though there be a tribunal appointed for promulgating such law, and explaining it whenever any controversy arises on this subject; so it is equally true to say, that the rule of our moral life is the divine word, though there be in the Church of Christ a tribunal appointed by him for the purpose of proposing it to the faithful, and explaining it whenever any question on this subject is discussed.

Hence you see, that the principles of the Catholic Church, concerning the rule of faith, far from being intricate and perplexing, as Protestants assert, are quite clear, and accommodated to every man's capacity. They may be classed under the three following heads:—

1. Jesus Christ having appeared amongst us, to instruct us on those divine truths most essentially connected with our salvation, we are absolutely obliged to believe and follow his doctrine.

2. Jesus Christ having instituted an external and teaching authority to be the depositary of his

doctrine, we are under an absolute obligation of being subject to and directed by her in the path of truth to eternal salvation.

3. The pastors of the Catholic Church constituting that authority which Christ established in his Church for the purpose of preserving and teaching his doctrine to the people, we are under an absolute obligation of being subject to, and accepting from them the doctrine of eternal salvation.

PROTESTANT.—The apostle St. Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, says, that “the sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the spirit of God....but the spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged by no man.” (1 *Cor.* ii. 14-15.) This doctrine of the apostle seems to be conformable to that of St. John, who, in his first epistle, says: “And you have no need that any man teach you: but as his unction teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie.” (1 *John* ii. 27.) How can this be true if there be an external authority appointed by Christ for teaching the faithful his doctrine, and solving all doubts and difficulties that may arise touching his doctrine? I admit that there are several “unstable and unlearned people,” of whom St. Peter says, that “they wrest the holy scriptures to their own destruction.” (2 *Peter* iii. 16.) But such as are, on the contrary, stable and learned, escape every danger.

CATHOLIC.—It is difficult to discover how Protestants can deduce from such texts—which manifestly bear a signification totally different from that which they give to them—any argument for themselves. To begin with the first; what is the meaning of a *spiritual* man, unless a man who is endued with

the spirit of God? and who has the spirit of God but he who faithfully adheres to the doctrine of those to whom Jesus Christ has said—"He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.....I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever.....The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things"?

The *sensual* man, of whom mention is made in this place, is he who measures divine mysteries by natural reason, sense, and human wisdom only. Of him it is said, that he does not perceive the things which appertain to the spirit of God, because they surpass all human understanding. The spiritual man is he who takes, in the mysteries of religion, not human sense for his guide, but submits his judgment to the decisions of the Church, which he is commanded to hear and obey, under pain of being regarded as a heathen and a publican. Of him it is said, that he *judges all things*, because, directed by the Church, he adheres to the doctrine of truth, and is enabled to judge correctly of its excellency, and of the vanity and worthlessness of whatever be opposed to it. It is also declared, that he himself is not judged by any man, because, as it is the province of the Church to pass judgment upon man respecting supernatural things, he who adheres faithfully to the Church is removed from all danger of any person passing judgment upon him.

The faithful, to whom St. John writes, were already instructed by their pastors in the true doctrine of Christ; but some deceivers, who always abound in the world, endeavoured to lead them into error by false maxims. Hence St. John writes to them, guarding them against these seducers, telling them that they stood not in need of their instruction,

and exhorting them to stand firm in the faith which they had received from their pastors, who were endued with the unction of the Holy Spirit. This reasoning is not groundless, for it rests upon the authority of the same apostle, who, in the above mentioned chapter, says—"As for you, let that which you have heard from the beginning, abide in you. If that abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning, you also shall abide in the Son and the Father.....These things have I written to you, concerning them that seduce you. And as for you, let the unction, which you have received from him, abide in you. And you have no need that any man teach you : but as his unction teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie. And as it hath taught you, abide in him." (1 John ii. 24-27.) It is then clear, that the apostle, in these words, intends to say—"You require not the teaching of any of these men, who, under the pretence of imparting more knowledge to you, seek to seduce you ; for you are already sufficiently taught by your pastors, in whom the unction of the Holy Ghost dwells, in which these new teachers do not participate."

The word *unlearned*, employed by the apostle St. Peter, and cited by you, means particularly those who are not taught by the pastors of the Church, to whom Jesus Christ entrusted the sacred deposit of his doctrine, and whom he commissioned to teach all nations. The word *unstable*, likewise, signifies those who are not confirmed by the pastors of the Church, who are appointed by Christ to teach the faithful, lest they become like children, fluctuating and "carried away by every wind of doctrine, and seduced into error."

PROTESTANT.—I would have your opinion respecting those who, persuaded that the Catholic

Church is a false and corrupted Church, refuse to be subject to her pastors. Are they to be on this account condemned, and reckoned with those who walk in the way of perdition—dying in such sentiments, can they be saved?

CATHOLIC.—They who refuse subjection to the pastors of the Catholic Church inculpably, only owing to their ignorance of the divine authority with which such pastors are endued, and proceed in good faith, perceiving no evil in what they do, cannot be regarded on this account as people guilty in the sight of God, and walking in the path of perdition. There is, indeed, a general law, enacted by Christ, by which all mankind are commanded to range themselves under the standard of that authority, which he established in his Church for the purpose of teaching them the doctrine of truth, and leading them to the attainment of eternal salvation. But this law being quite unknown to those who, without their fault, look on the Catholic Church as a false and corrupted church, they are not therefore to be condemned on this account, but enlightened if possible, that, knowing such law, they may be enabled to fulfil it. Hence, Catholic divines acknowledge a very great difference between *formal* (to adopt their term) and *material* heretics. “Men who, without pertinacious animosity, defend an opinion, however false, however perverse—particularly when they themselves have not presumptuously broached, but received it from parents seduced and led into error—are by no means,” observes St. Augustine, “to be accounted heretics, provided they seek the truth carefully and diligently, and be ready to correct their error upon discovering it.” (*St. Aug. Epist. 43, alias 162.*)

The case is far different with those who wilfully

refuse to acknowledge that authority, which Christ was pleased to confer on the pastors of his Church, either by despising the internal motions of the Holy Ghost inviting them to examine the foundation on which rests the Catholic Church, or by closing their eyes against the light of truth which shines upon them. For thus they wilfully despise the authority of God communicated to his Church, and, like the Jews, "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, they resist the Holy Ghost." (*Acts* vii. 51.)

The want of subjection to the pastors of the Catholic Church, arising from invincible ignorance of that authority, with which they are invested, does not prevent people from attaining eternal salvation. Nevertheless, there are some reasons for which the salvation of those who die in such a state is to be regarded as very perilous; *1st*, because the want of subjection to that authority which Christ established in his Church for teaching his doctrine, is sometimes accompanied with the want of true faith on those points which are to be explicitly believed for attaining eternal salvation, as the Incarnation, &c.; *2dly*, because the want of subjection to such authority is generally accompanied with the contempt, or at least the neglect, of those means from which we are to derive the necessary grace for sanctifying our souls and attaining eternal salvation—which means are the holy Sacraments.

Hence, I should think, that if amongst those people, who, without any fault on their part, are not subject to the authority of the Catholic Church, there were any individual really and sincerely desirous of doing the will of God in every respect, notwithstanding every sacrifice, Almighty God would not fail to provide some means, from the treasures of his infinite wisdom and goodness, to conduct

such a person to the knowledge of the truth, and to the communion of his holy Church, and would send down, if necessary, even an angel from heaven.

In the Acts of the Apostles, it is said that "the Lord daily added to the Church such as should be saved" (*Acts* ii. 47), and that "as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed" (*Acts* xiii. 48); that is, were brought to the true faith which the apostles preached. Now, what the Lord daily performed in the time of the apostles, he will continue to do until the end of the world. And as, at that period, those who were to be saved were added to the Church, and submitted to her pastors, from whom they received the doctrine of truth; so will it be, ordinarily speaking, until the consummation of ages.

THIRD DIALOGUE.

PROTESTANT.—Your remarks on the existence of an external and teaching authority in the Church of Christ, are very forcible indeed.

CATHOLIC.—Why then are Protestants so decidedly hostile to Catholics, and so strangely opposed to any one joining their communion? Are not Catholics believers, adhering to that visible and teaching authority which Christ appointed in his Church? Why then persecute them, and those who wish to be united with them? What a singular and unaccountable fact! Thousands and thousands leave the Church of England, to enlist amongst Methodists, Quakers, Anabaptists, and to join the ranks of numerous other sectarians, which abound in this unfortunate nation, without meeting any persecution or opposition; but seldom is there an instance of an individual leaving the Protestant Church to enter the Church of his forefathers, who is not opposed and persecuted by his fellow men of various religious denominations; and most of all by his very friends and nearest relatives. Is not this a fulfilment of those words of our Redeemer: "You shall be hated by all men, for my name's sake"? (*Matth. x. 22.*)

PROTESTANT.—Were the Roman Catholic Church holy and pure, as in the first centuries, instead of being opposed by Protestants, she would be highly esteemed and favoured by them; but having once deviated from truth, and become infected with so many errors, they cannot but declare hostility against her, and be astonished that any sensible man should remain within her pale.

CATHOLIC.—Were Protestants well informed of the solid reasons by which Catholics are moved to adhere closely to their Church, far from being surprised at seeing any sensible man peacefully remaining within her pale, they would rather be much surprised at seeing any sensible man remaining without it. “To say nothing of the wisdom,” thus each Catholic may exclaim with St. Augustine, “the existence of which you deny to the Catholic Church, there are many other reasons which most justly detain me in her bosom. I am held in it by the consent of countries and nations. I am held by an authority which miracles have contributed to establish, which hope has fostered, which charity has encreased, and to which time has given stability. I am held by an uninterrupted succession of pastors from St. Peter, to whom our Lord consigned the feeding of his flock, after his resurrection, to the present pontiff. Finally, I am held in her bosom by the name of *catholic*, which this Church has deservedly retained, by an exclusive right, amidst so many heresies; for though all heretics wish to be called Catholics, yet, if a stranger should inquire the way to the Catholic Church, none of them would have the assurance do direct the inquirer to his house or temple.” (*St. Aug. contra Epist. Fundam. c. 4.*) But let us direct our attention to the charge brought by Protestants against the Catholic Church, of having deviated from truth and fallen into many errors.

“’Tis said with ease, but never can be prov’d,
The Church her old foundations has remov’d,
And built new doctrines on unstable sands;
Judge her, ye winds and rains. Ye prov’d her,
yet she stands.”—*Dryden*,

If it be true that the Roman Catholic Church fell into grievous error after the first centuries,

would you have the kindness to point out the exact epoch of that eventful fall? At what precise period did the Roman Catholic Church deviate from truth, and turn herself to the vain traditions of men? Tell me not that the Catholic Church fell gradually into a state of corruption, for this is impossible. Had she ever deviated from truth, she would have ceased to form the true Church of Christ—which must be essentially pure and holy in all her doctrines—from the very moment in which she deviated in the least from the doctrine of Christ; and, consequently, from that very moment she would have fallen into a state of corruption. Were the assertion, therefore, of Protestants true, namely, that the Catholic Church departed from truth after the first centuries, there must be a certain determinate period of time in which that momentous epoch occurred. Would you point out to me the precise period when such corruption arose?

PROTESTANT.—Some say that this momentous event happened about the fourth, others the fifth, and others the sixth, while others (with whom I agree) fix upon the seventh century.

CATHOLIC.—Alas! does not this great difference in opinions clearly demonstrate that the charge alleged against the Roman Catholic Church is groundless? Were there existing merely a difference of some years, it would excite less astonishment; but must not every sensible man stand in utter amazement to see the vast difference, the wide gap, of centuries and centuries, upon a subject which affects so great a portion of mankind, and which, had it occurred, would necessarily have excited the feelings and roused the just indignation of every christian throughout the universe?

PROTESTANT.—The variety of opinions held by Protestants respecting the time of this event matters little, because all are agreed upon the fact itself, namely, that there was a certain period in which the Roman Catholic Church swerved from truth, and then she passed from being the Church of Christ to a state of corruption.

CATHOLIC.—Do you not perceive that the assertion of Protestants on this subject is most injurious to Christ? Of all blasphemies against Christ what more guilty and horrible, than to say that our Redeemer abandoned his Church by permitting her to fall into error? Moreover, how was this introduction of new doctrines received by the Christians of that age? Did they adhere to, or protest against them? If they adhered to them, where was the immaculate spouse of the spotless Lamb? Where was that Church which is called by the apostle “the pillar and foundation of truth”? What became of the promise of Christ, that he would be with the apostles and their successors till the end of the world?

PROTESTANT.—Christ’s Church never failed; because there have always been some who protested against the errors of the Roman Church, even from the beginning of her defection from truth.

CATHOLIC.—If it be true, as you say, I beg leave to ask, whether such as protested against the errors of the Roman Catholic Church were few or many. If few, where was at that time the Church of Christ, which, according to the doctrine of the scripture, and the belief of Protestants themselves, must be *catholic*, namely, universal? You know that God promised to Abraham, that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed (*Gen.*

xxii. 18); that he renewed this same promise to Isaac; that of the extent and universality of his spiritual kingdom, the scriptural prophecies are literally full; that Isaiah predicted that the nations should flow unto the Church (ii. 2.); that the royal prophet sang of the apostles in exalted strains, that "their sounds went forth unto all the earth, and their words to the end thereof" (*Ps.* xviii. 5); that all the families of the earth were to turn to the Lord (xxi. 28-29); that our Lord commanded his apostles to teach all nations (*Matth.* xxviii. 19); that he declared, in the most explicit terms, that penance and the remission of sin should be preached to all nations (*Luke* xxiv. 47); and that he clearly promised to support them and their successors in these labours to the end of the world. (*Matth.* xxviii. 20.) Now, where was, at the period of the supposed fall of the Roman Catholic Church, that visible kingdom of God, spread through all the world, and embracing people of every nation? Where was to be found that body of pastors and doctors, which Christ gave to his Church until the end of the world, for the purpose of confirming the faithful in truth?

If you say that those who protested against the errors of the Roman Catholic Church, in the very beginning of her supposed fall, were many, I ask you again, whence comes it, that Protestants so widely differ as to the epoch of that fact? How could this great event, of millions and millions of people, spread throughout the world, revolting against that Church in which they were nurtured, remain concealed, if such revolt had ever been?

Besides, how did the Roman Catholic Church, even at that time, maintain her influence through all the world as before? Where was to be found, without her pale, such a body of christians, protesting against her errors, as could constitute the

universal Church of Christ? Did the bishops and priests through all the world, at that period, revolt against the Pope and his adherents, that they might maintain the purity of the doctrine of Christ and preserve his Church? Who are they who first rose against the supposed corruption of the Roman Catholic Church?

PROTESTANT.—The men who protested against the errors of the Roman Church from the very beginning of her fall, were numerous indeed; but their protestations being all interior, and confined within the secret recesses of their hearts, remained unknown to the world, who sees only what appears exteriorly. Hence, the true Church of Christ did not fail with the downfall of the Roman Church, but continued in a hidden state for several centuries.

CATHOLIC.—Whence do you ascertain that, after the supposed fall of the Roman Catholic Church, there were spread throughout the world numbers protesting against her, and holding steadfastly the real doctrine of Christ, if all this happened within the hidden precincts of their hearts, without shewing it exteriorly? Did God, who alone is the searcher of the human heart, manifest this important circumstance to you? What would become of mankind were it lawful to recur to mere assertions, founded on interior and hidden facts, in order to defend our opinion? Besides, how is it possible that millions and millions, spread through all the world, could so restrain themselves, as not to manifest distinctly and openly their interior opposition to the Roman Catholic Church, had she really fallen into error? Are not christians obliged to profess exteriorly that faith, which they interiorly believe? The apostles, who really believed the doctrine of Christ, could not be re-

strained from manifesting it exteriorly; so that when the Jewish council called on Peter and John, and charged them, under the severest threats, not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus, they answered them: "If it be just in the sight of God, to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (*Acts* iv. 18-20.) It is true that the virtue of faith consists in believing the doctrine of God, on account of his infinite veracity; but, being composed of a spiritual and corporeal substance, we must profess it exteriorly, according to those words of the apostle St. Paul: "With the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (*Rom.* x. 10.) How then is it possible, that millions and millions concealed their faith during so many centuries, in violation of that sacred obligation, under which all christians are, of exteriorly professing it, particularly when it cannot be concealed without implicitly denying it?

Further, how can the Church of Christ have been existing at that period, in people who were all unfaithful to their duty, and, consequently, enemies of God? It is quite evident from scripture, that at every period there will be very many christians in the Church of Christ, faithful to their duty, acceptable to God, and shining for sanctity: but where was this Church distinguished for sanctity of members at that time, in which they all refused to profess openly their faith, and to protest openly against error?

Finally, I request you particularly to bear in mind, that the Church of Christ must be perpetually visible. For how are incorrigible brethren to be made known to the Church, if the Church is not visible? How is it possible for the shepherds to feed their flocks, if these flocks cannot be known by any visible sign? How can the flocks

possibly have recourse to their pastors, unless these pastors bear some distinguished mark? How is it possible for the doctors to confirm the faithful in the faith, and preserve them from error, if the faithful have no external sign by which they are to be recognized? How is it possible for the faithful to recur to their doctors to be confirmed in the true faith, and defended from error, if these doctors have not some distinguishing mark to point them out?

Therefore, it is quite clear that the Church of Jesus Christ must be perpetually visible. I say *perpetually*: for there is a perpetual obligation imposed by Christ on the faithful of denouncing incorrigible brethren to the Church, and of looking upon those who refuse to hear her as heathens and publicans; and also because the obligations of pastors and doctors are *perpetual*. Now, where was this visible Church at the period of which you speak?

But as you say, that the Church of Christ continued to be in a hidden state only for several centuries, I would know *who* were the first that protested *openly* and exteriorly against the supposed errors of the Roman Catholic Church?

PROTESTANT.—The first who openly arose against the errors of the Roman Church, and opposed them most strenuously, were the reformers, and numbers of christians subsequently followed their example.

CATHOLIC.—What do you mean by this term “Reformers”?

PROTESTANT.—This term is applied to those who restored to the Church of Christ her primitive form, of which she had been deprived during

several centuries, owing to the errors of the Roman Church.

CATHOLIC.—You cannot surely be serious in venturing this most unaccountable assertion, which is directly at variance with holy writ! Has not Christ clearly declared in scripture, the existence, the visibility, the extent, the dignity, the indefectibility, and the unerring authority of his spiritual kingdom, his Church? Has he not pronounced that she should stand unshaken on a rock, in defiance of the gates of hell; that he would protect her even to the consummation of the world; that she is the pillar and foundation of truth; that we are bound to obey her under pain of being considered as heathens and publicans? What, I ask, became of these promises of Christ, if his Church had lost her primitive form prior to the days of the reformers? Can the true Church of God, which must be essentially holy and pure, exist without her real form, or be infected with various corruptions? These interrogatories are unanswerable. The real difference in fact between the Catholic and the Protestant is, that the former places an unlimited reliance on the words and promises of our Redeemer; whereas the latter depends on the supposed failure of these promises. The Catholic believes that the gates of hell will never prevail against the Church, because Jesus Christ has given a solemn assurance to this effect: the Protestant, notwithstanding this assurance, unhesitatingly declares that the gates of hell have actually prevailed against the Church, which is fallen into every species of error and corruption. Hence, it is apparent that the Catholic honors Christ by admitting the truth of his assurance, while the Protestant refuses him that homage which is due to his infinite power and veracity.

But let us examine somewhat more distinctly this subject regarding the greatly celebrated reformers.

You are fully aware, I presume, that it is incontestably clear, both from scripture and reason, that a true and authorized mission is essential to all who undertake the great charge of preaching, and teaching others the doctrine of Christ. Christ being the Lord of his vineyard, it belongs to him to send labourers to cultivate it. Whoever presumptuously assumes this charge of himself, without being chosen by our Lord, is to be regarded as a robber and a thief (*John* x. 1), and nothing can ensue from such intrusion but mischief and ruin. Hence we read, that the apostles never ventured to preach until they had received an ample commission to perform that sacred office: "As the Father," says Jesus Christ to them, "hath sent me, even so I send you" (*John* xx. 21); and again: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations." (*Matth.* xxviii. 18-19.) Hence St. Paul, who assuredly understood the intention of Christ, mentioning the preachers of the word, asks—"Now, how shall they preach except they be sent." (*Rom.* x. 15.) Hence we are advised by Christ to ask of him to send labourers into his Church, by those words: "The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he send labourers into his harvest." (*Luke* x. 2.)

This mission, requisite for undertaking in the Church of Christ the sacred office of preaching his divine word, consists in a special commission given by the legitimate pastors of the Church, or immediately by God himself, to preach his gospel and feed his sheep. If it be derived from the regular pastors of his Church, it is called *ordinary*

mission; but if it be immediately received from God, it is called *extraordinary* mission. On this ground, Tertullian asks the heretics of his age—"Who are you? When and whence did you come?" (*De Præscr.* c. 37.) And St. Cyprian, speaking of Novatian, says—"He is not in the Church, nor can he be accounted a bishop; because, despising apostolical tradition, he came of himself." (*Epist.* 76.)

What mission, of any description whatever, I would triumphantly ask, could the reformers ever produce, to justify their extraordinary proceedings? If Jesus Christ himself did not come without being sent; if the apostles did not plant the gospel without a peculiar commission to engage in that holy enterprise; what could justify those personages, not only in preaching without authority, but in changing, innovating and destroying, under the specious pretext of reformation? St. Paul assures the Galatians, that if an angel from heaven should preach a doctrine different from what he had delivered to them, he was to be considered as accursed. (*Gal.* i. 8.) But these self-commissioned reformation-men did not justify themselves, it appears, on such high authority. If we are to believe the admission of Luther and Zuinglius, a prompter from the infernal abyss had a great share in their proceedings. (*Luth. epist. ad Elect. Sax.*)

PROTESTANT.—The reformers required no mission whatever, because every man is entitled to protest against error. Seeing the Roman Catholic Church contaminated with error, they separated from her, and prevailed on others to follow their example. Is there anything culpable in this proceeding? Is not every man strictly bound to secure himself against evil?

CATHOLIC.—That every man is entitled to protest against error is true. But how are we to discover whether any doctrine in matters of faith be erroneous? Are we to follow our private opinion? Decidedly not; otherwise, by mistaking truth for error, we should involve christian doctrine in confusion and darkness. On this subject, we must depend on those whom Christ has appointed to be the teachers of truth, and to whom he has promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit until the end of the world. Why did our Redeemer command the Church to be heard, under the severest penalties? What was Christ's object in the appointment of apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors, but that we might not be carried away with every wind of doctrine, and follow our own judgment and caprice, instead of adhering to the faith of Christ? Why are we told that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation, and that the unlearned and unstable wrest the scripture to their own perdition, but that we may not adopt the dangerous expedient of private judgment in determining the doctrine of Christ?

We must never forget that Christ entrusted the sacred deposit of his doctrine to the pastors of his Church, that he charged them to teach it to all nations, that he promised them his assistance and the light of the Holy Spirit until the end of the world: consequently it belongs to them to judge and decide in matters of faith. Hence, whoever raises his head, presuming to denounce them as holding erroneous doctrines and corrupting the purity of faith, is to be looked upon as an accursed, were he even an angel from heaven. (*Gal. i. 8.*)

PROTESTANT.—The reformers had most probab-

ly their mission from the Church of Rome, in whose communion they passed their early years.

CATHOLIC.—If the reformers received their mission from the Catholic Church, as you suppose, then the Catholic Church possessed, until the period of the Reformation, a legitimate authority for preaching the word of God; and consequently, down to that time she was assisted by the Holy Ghost, and the faithful were obliged to obey her, under pain of being considered as heathens and publicans. Why, then, did the reformers disobey her? Is there any point clearer in scripture, than the obligation, under which all the faithful are bound, of obeying the pastors of the Church invested with legitimate authority? Why, then, did the reformers disobey them? Did they receive from Christ a counter-commission? If they received such commission, let them prove it; but if they cannot prove it, the original commission stands in its full-unqualified force against them, and they are absolutely to be regarded as heathens and publicans.

Moreover, how can it be proved that the Catholic Church ever delivered to the reformers such mission? No; she never authorized them to alter the faith and discipline, and to dissolve the whole frame of ecclesiastical government. The Catholic Church never allowed her own children to stigmatize the religion of the whole Catholic world as superstitious, idolatrous, damnable, bloody, traitorous, blind, blasphemous, and thus to load her with the severest terms of reproach which language can supply.

PROTESTANT.—It may be that the reformers received their mission immediately from God himself.

CATHOLIC.—The extraordinary mission, which comes immediately from God, must be proved by uncommon sanctity of morals, by consummate purity of doctrine, and most assuredly by the gift of miracles; because it must possess such characters as may render the testimony of divine origin clear and indubitable, so as to induce men to believe it as truly and directly coming from God. Hence, when Moses was deputed by Almighty God to deliver the children of Israel from their painful and protracted slavery, he proved his mission by extraordinary signs and wonders. Even our Redeemer himself declares of the Jews, that if he had not done amongst them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin. (*John* xv. 22.) Questioned by the disciples of John whether he was he that was to come, the Redeemer said to them: "Go, and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them." (*Matth.* xi. 4-5.) Hence, sending his disciples to preach to the Jewish nation, he said to them: "Going preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils." (*Matth.* x. 7-8.) And, a little before his passion, praying to his heavenly Father, he earnestly asked him to preserve his apostles from evil, to sanctify them in truth, to make them one as he was one with him, that the world might believe in his divine mission. (*John* xvii. 14-21.)

Thus, nothing short of unsullied purity of doctrine and morals, and a decided gift of miracles, could rationally induce mankind to bestow the slightest attention on the proceedings of the reformers. Now, that a miraculous operation never formed the subject of their pious exultation, is an

undeniable fact. As to their supposed purity of doctrine and sanctity of morals, I would direct your particular attention to the authentic and unquestionable account given by the learned and eloquent Bossuet (*Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes*, c. i. x.), which will convince you that men more impious in conduct, and more extravagant in doctrine, never appeared in the world. The apostle St. Peter, speaking of some heretics of his time, calls them men "who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government, audacious, self-willed: they fear not to bring sects blaspheming...as irrational beasts, naturally tending to the snare and to destruction, blaspheming those things which they know not....Having eyes full of adultery and of sin that ceases not; alluring unstable souls, having their hearts exercised with covetousness, children of malediction; leaving the right way, they are gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam of Bozor, who loved the wages of iniquity." (2 *Pet.* ii. 10-15.) To the reformers of every denomination this character is not, in the opinion of thinking men of every persuasion, altogether inapplicable.

Who can persuade himself that God wished to employ such men in the sacred and apostolic office of enlightening the world, and recalling nations from darkness to light? Jesus Christ, in the gospel of St. Matthew, commands us to beware of false prophets, and to know them by their works. "Beware of false prophets," he says, "who come to you in the cloathing of sheep; but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them." (vii. 15-16.) How is it possible to believe these words of Jesus Christ, without concluding that Luther, Calvin, Henry VIII., and similar characters, were hypocrites and impostors?

Before terminating this point relative to the re-

formers, I have other questions to ask. In the first place, I would know whether all, or merely a portion of the reformers, were raised by God to save the christian world from the supposed corruption of the Roman Catholic Church? If all, then let me inquire, whence comes it that they disagree amongst themselves on the most material points of christian doctrine? How is it possible, that persons who contradict each other in important, weighty and momentous tenets of faith, can all be aided or inspired by Almighty God to enlighten mankind concerning the great and all-essential subject of religion? Is it not undoubtedly evident that truth can be but one, and that God cannot reveal contradictory doctrines? If you say that a portion of the reformers only were chosen by God for the sublime and holy mission of enlightening the world, then answer my interrogatories—Who are they? How are they to be discovered and distinguished from those who arrogated to themselves the high-sounding title of reformers without being entitled to it? Who assures you that they whom you consider true reformers fell not into error like others?

Another question I would propose to you on this subject—do you receive all the doctrines which were taught by those reformers whom you regard as sent from God, or only a part of them? If you receive all, then I ask again—whence arises the difference which exists between your and their belief on several points of faith? If you receive only some part of them, then I would know the reason of your doing so. Why do you refuse to accept their doctrines, if they be really sent by God to instruct mankind? Is it not injurious to God to disbelieve those who are sent by him to teach us his holy will?

You will say, in answer to this question, that several points of their doctrine are unscriptural,

and consequently erroneous. Yet, how do you know that they are really such? Numbers of your dissenting brethren insist on them being most scriptural, and that, on the contrary, some of those points which you hold are decidedly unscriptural. How is the truth to be discovered?

The fact is, that nothing is more confused, intricate and obscure, than the Protestant religion. Why do Protestants apply to the reformers in defence of their tenets, since they constitute themselves judges of their doctrine, and reject those points which they imagine exist not in holy writ? They apply this term of reformers exclusively to the heads of the Protestant sects; but every Protestant is in reality a reformer; for every Protestant elects himself judge, and condemns the doctrine of others—framing, moreover, to himself a system which he denominates religion, not according to what is absolutely contained in the holy scripture, but according to what he fancies to be contained therein.

St. Paul, in the second letter to Timothy, says, "There shall be a time, when men will not endure sound doctrine: but according to their own desire they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: and will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables." (iv. 3-4.) This prediction, which began to be verified in the first ages of the Church, was entirely accomplished, it appears, in these latter ages, and particularly at the period of the pretended reformation.

FOURTH DIALOGUE.

PROTESTANT.—Whatever be the case respecting the leaders of the Protestant Reformation, it is a certain fact, that amongst the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church some there are absolutely new, erroneous, and opposed to the doctrine of scripture and of the primitive Church.

CATHOLIC.—Were the doctrines of the Catholic Church of a flattering nature, indulgent to man's degeneracy, fostering his corruption, and pandering to his passions, like many of those disseminated by heretics, the charge which Protestants bring against them, implying that they are novel, varying from the doctrines of holy scripture, and opposed to the ancient Church, would not arrest my attention; but what sensible man, after considering the heavenly nature of such doctrines, which, instead of succumbing to natural degeneracy, and the gratification of human passions, are so rigidly and inflexibly opposed to them, can hear this most unsupported charge without concern and astonishment? How is it possible that doctrines, humbling and galling to man's pride, painful and wounding to his nature, could have ever been rapidly disseminated throughout the whole world in latter ages, and forthwith received by millions of every nation, clime, state, rank, and education; so that, if we believe Protestants, the world must have changed its aspect instantaneously, passing abruptly from the pure doctrines of Christ to the vain and wicked inventions of men? Assuredly, had men attempted to impose in so gross a manner upon the world, they would not only have failed in their object, but would have called forth from

mankind a universal expression of anger and execration against them and their novelties.

No; the Catholic Church has never introduced novelty or change in matters of faith.

She does, indeed, propose to the faithful many articles not expressed in the ancient creeds: but this circumstance by no means supports the charge brought by Protestants against her, namely, of framing new articles of faith; because, in doing so, she acts in conformity with the commission which she received from Christ of teaching his doctrine to the faithful until the consummation of ages. The Catholic Church ever remembers the promise of her divine spouse, who declared that all truth should be communicated to his Church through his apostles; and of the truths thus delivered to her she deems herself the authorized depository and the faithful guardian. When, therefore, she directs the faithful to receive any article of faith previously undefined, she does not frame a new doctrine of faith, but only proposes and unfolds what was communicated to her by the divine spirit, in conformity with that charge which she received from Christ.

On the nature of the general charge given to the Church to maintain the deposit of faith, St. Vincent of Lerins thus beautifully expatiates: "What is a deposit? It is that which is entrusted to you, not that which is the fruit of your invention: it is what you have received, not what you have devised: it is a matter not of ingenuity, but of learning: it is not a private assumption of authority, but an affair of public tradition: a thing transmitted to you, not produced by you: a concern in which you are not to pass for the author, but the guardian, not the founder, but the disciple: not the leader, but the follower." (*Commonitor. contra Hær. c. xxvii.*)

Moreover, what are these doctrines which should be regarded, in your opinion, as new, erroneous, contradictory to the holy scripture and the ancient Church? In answering this question how strangely are Protestants divided! Some, for instance, advocating Calvin's doctrine, believe that the real presence belongs to them. Others, adhering to the Lutheran doctrine, flatly deny it. The Quaker affirms that baptism by water is an error of the Catholic Church. The Methodist supports the contrary belief. In the Church of England itself, some there are who assert that certain articles of faith held by the Catholic Church are novelties, and others, who bear the distinguished appellation of *doctor*, entertain a different opinion. How can we discover, from the testimony of Protestants, the doctrines in which the Roman Catholic Church deviated from truth? Do not Methodists, Quakers, Socinians, Anabaptists, &c. equally maintain, with the Church of England, that they have a right to protest and vociferate against the supposed errors of the Roman Catholic Church? Whom, then, shall we believe? The most prudent measure that can be adopted under such circumstances, is, I think, to disbelieve them all, viewing their charges against the Roman Catholic Church as gross, unqualified calumnies.

Let us suppose that witnesses far and near were brought into court to prove the guilt of the defendant, and that the fact of his guilt be stated differently by each witness, this giving one date, that another, and yet these witnesses do unanimously persist in their charges against the defendant. Let us also suppose that these witnesses, wavering in their mode of attack, subsequently conjure up new points of accusation, which they had previously overlooked as trifling and insignificant; devise and introduce statements directly contradicting their

former evidence. What would be the conduct of a wise and prudent judge in this case, but to dismiss charges preferred by characters deserving no better name than that of guilty and designing impostors? Whether the conduct of Protestants of every denomination, relative to the Catholic Church, may not be justly assimilated to this supposed case, I would confidently appeal to every honest and unprejudiced man who is acquainted with the history of the Reformation.

If we seriously consider the subject under consideration, there will be found no difficulty in perceiving, that the grave charge of holding new and erroneous doctrines, which Protestants continually prefer against the Catholic Church, is most clearly applicable to the Protestant religion; for, owing to the principle adopted by her, of private judgment, the many alterations she has undergone in points of faith, it is utterly impossible to enumerate!

The great patriarchs of the Reformation founded various sects, widely differing from each other in faith and worship, in the course of a very short period, and each party altered soon its own belief. The celebrated confession of Augsbourg, on which occasion the seceders from the ancient faith first assumed the new appellation of Protestants, was framed in 1529, and shortly afterwards presented to the emperor Chales V.: but which no sooner appeared than it was modified by Melancthon. Luther, dissatisfied with this performance, drew up the articles of Smalkalde. This latter attempt, however, proving unsatisfactory to the party, the confession of Saxony was the immediate consequence; and, subsequently, the two confessions of Wittemberg. (*Bossuet's Histoire des Variations*, Pref. No. 13.) The other branches of reform have been no less prolific in variations than the parent

stock. If you follow their history, with ordinary observation, you will constantly witness new confessions of faith, and repeated attempts to unite in belief that which, by the nature of things, is irreconcilable. Such has been the nature of heresy in every age; such was the history of Arianism; and such was the character of heretics given by Tertullian, in a passage which deserves to be quoted. Speaking of the heretics of his time, he says,—“I am guilty of a great departure from truth, if they are not perpetually changing their own principles; every individual modifies the particular tenets he has received according to his own fancy, thus imitating the liberty of the founder of his sect. The progress of heresy unfolds its nature and the character of its origin. What was done by Valentinus was deemed lawful for his followers; and what was practised by Marcion being justifiable authority for his disciples, they assumed the privilege of remodelling their faith, according to the dictates of their own fancy.” (*Tertull. de Præscript. c. 42.*)

To be fully persuaded of this fact, we need only glance cursorily at England, which at present swarms with numerous sects, preposterously inconsistent on the most essential doctrinal points of Christianity. How is it possible that such wandering sects, which are at variance among themselves on the most important and vital points of religion, can adhere to and really follow the pure doctrines of Christ? Can the God of truth sanction this Babel-like confusion, and reveal to one party as tenable what he condemns in another as untenable? He cannot; truth is essentially one; and St. Paul most emphatically and decidedly assures us, that “there is but one Lord, *one faith*, one baptism.” The spirit of God cannot reveal to the Socinian,

that Christ is merely a pure creature, and, at the same time, positively teach the other classes of christians a doctrine precisely the reverse of this.

“ If God, like man, his purpose could renew,
His laws could vary, or his plans undo,
Desponding faith would drop its cheerless wing,
Religion deaden to a lifeless thing.”—*Boyle*.

What especially deserves to be noticed here, is, that the Protestant religion, besides being split into a numberless variety of divisions on the most material points, the divinity of Christ not excepted, is also unable to remedy this evil by establishing union amongst her members; for this union cannot be obtained without exacting obedience from her children—and this is tantamount to impossibility!

“ For how can she constrain them to obey,
Who has herself cast off the lawful sway?”—*Dryden*.

The great patriarchs of the Protestant religion were themselves, in the face of the whole world, scandalous examples of most guilty and glaring disobedience to that Church, in whose bosom they had been nurtured for a considerable time, and who actually established their religion on this very insubordination to her authority! With what pretension can these men exact obedience from their followers? And hence the fluctuating, the wild and incoherent conduct of Protestants in matters of faith, should be attributed, not so much to the fault of the individuals wandering astray, as to their *system*, which necessarily conducts to change, disunion and dissolution.

PROTESTANT.—All the great churches of the Reformation agree amongst themselves as to the

fundamental doctrines of faith, and proclaim aloud, in one harmonious concert, the same dogmas on which eternal salvation depends.

CATHOLIC.—I must frankly and honestly admit, my good friend, that I am always at a loss to comprehend how the distinction between the fundamental and non-fundamental articles of faith—invented by Protestants to justify and sanction the innumerable changes which unceasingly occur in their religion—can have the most distant tendency to favour their cause. Where is it demonstrated that the unity of faith which is essential to the Church of Christ, merely consists in maintaining some principal dogmas? Forcible reasons, I am of opinion, may be adduced to prove the contrary.

1. Jesus Christ promised to his apostles, that his divine spirit should teach them *all truth*, and should remain with them for ever; which implies that his Church would profess *all truth for ever*, and not some particular articles of faith only.

2. Jesus Christ sending his apostles to preach the gospel to all creatures, required every article to be believed, saying in general (*Matth. xxviii. 19-20*), “Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” And—“Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned.” (*Mark xvi. 15-16.*)

3. All the articles of faith rest upon one and the same foundation, viz. the veracity of God.

4. All the articles of faith are intended to elevate the mind and heart of man to the knowledge and love of supernatural good.

5. To assert that God revealed his doctrine to man, with liberty to embrace or reject it at pleasure, is ridiculous and absurd. To suppose that man may, without offering insult and outrage to Almighty God, refuse his assent to what he has revealed, is most repugnant and revolting to human reason.

Supposing, however, for a moment, that it would be sufficient to believe these fundamental articles, must we not first, even in this case, of necessity know them? Now, what are these articles? Some assert they are those which are clearly expressed in the holy scripture. But is not this rather evading than solving the difficulty? What are these articles which are clearly expressed in the scripture? The Unitarian body affirms that the trinity of the divine persons is not founded on scripture, while others maintain the divinity of Jesus Christ cannot be supported on scriptural evidence. Are the views of such men correct respecting these leading and tremendous mysteries of the Deity? By whose authority is this great question to be determined? Does not every individual, according to Protestant principles, claim the right to himself of rejecting whatever articles may be proposed by others, and of proposing whatever he pleases, provided he believe them established on holy writ? How, therefore, is it possible to discover what are the fundamental articles which every christian is bound to believe?

Evidently, therefore, according to Protestant principles, it is impossible to determine the fundamental articles which are to be believed by every

Christian. Hence, how can it be asserted that Protestants agree in believing these articles, with which they are absolutely unacquainted?

Into what an abyss of confusion, perplexity and disorder, are Protestants precipitated, after having shaken off the yoke of that visible authority which Christ appointed in his Church to teach the people the doctrine of truth, and preserve it pure and undefiled until the end of time!

“Churches that are separated from the communion of the Church of Christ,” says Dr. Poynter in his *Christianity*, part 4, c. 4, “are like branches that are broken off from the vine: they must wither and die. They are like members separated from the body: being no longer animated by the spirit, they cannot perform the functions of life. They may, indeed, for a time, preserve more or less of the external forms of the Church of Christ; but there lies concealed within them a principle of dissolution, which destroys the interior substance of the body, and leaves an empty exterior appearance of true religion. They may be supported for a time in certain religious rites and forms of ecclesiastical government by the civil power which has adopted them. But, in fact, they become nothing more than civil institutions, and will exist no longer than whilst the state, whose creatures they are, supports them. ‘Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.’ (*Matth.* xv. 13.)

“Not so the Catholic Church. She lives in the body of the vine, and beareth fruit. She is the mystical body of Christ, animated and guided by his spirit. She possesses within herself, in the simplicity of her faith, a principle of immortality. Her spiritual powers are all derived from Christ. She has an existence independent of temporal kingdoms. She can live without them. She

will survive them all. 'The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed; and his kingdom shall not be delivered up to another people; and it shall break in pieces and shall consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand for ever.' (*Dan. ii. 44.*)"

PROTESTANT.—But amongst the doctrines of the Catholic Church, there are some, you must admit, inexplicable, absurd, and consequently novel, erroneous, and at variance with scripture and the ancient Church.

CATHOLIC.—I agree with you, that some of the doctrines of the Catholic Church are quite inexplicable; but I deny your inference. Do not Protestants believe many points of doctrine surpassing human comprehension? Can you explain how God created the world out of nothing? How three divine persons, perfectly distinct, should subsist in one divine nature? How all three should be God, and yet there should be only one God? How the bodies, which we now possess, moulder away, crumble into dust, and afterwards rise at the last day, endowed with such qualities as induced St. Paul to call them *spiritual bodies*? There are many that pass for talented men, and imagine themselves perfectly acquainted with holy scripture, who call in question these truths, which are generally admitted by Protestants. Is not your reply to infidels of this description—"With God all things are possible" (*Matth. xix. 26*); or, with St. Augustine: "The whole reason of the action is the power of him who performs it"? Whoever, therefore, admits professedly revealed truths of any description, cannot consistently withhold his assent to similar points properly attested, under pretext of any difficulty which corrupt reason may create.

To the Jew and to the heathen the whole mystery of our redemption, and the entire system of christianity, appear a subject of scandal and folly (1 Cor. i. 23): but are we to reject them on that account? No: we say, let them inquire candidly into the grounds upon which christianity rests, and they will be convinced of its divine origin, and of the obligation of believing it. The same language we may address to those who, professing a general belief of christianity, reject some doctrine of the Catholic Church, because they cannot comprehend them. Let them inquire candidly into the grounds upon which Catholicity rests, and they will be convinced of its divine origin, and of the obligation of believing it. But to reject Catholic doctrines only because they are incomprehensible, is to reject the word of God, and to take for their guide prejudice and passion.

In answer to your charge, that amongst the doctrines of the Catholic Church there are some quite absurd, I have to remark, that although it is perfectly correct to say that the works of God are above the reach of human reason, to assert that they are contrary to it, is positively false. Nothing can be more rational for the fallible creature, than to listen to the voice of the infallible creator, in whom there is no possibility of error.

But to express myself more distinctly on this subject, I would learn from you the correct definition of the word *absurd* doctrine. Do you mean a doctrine which surpasses human reason? If so, you destroy the foundations of the christian religion, because, being supernatural, they are consequently beyond the reach of human understanding. We may, indeed, assisted by the grace of God, know those truths which he has revealed to us, and firmly believe them; but so long as we are in this our miserable pilgrimage, in which we behold

these things, as it were, in a glass (1 Cor. xiii. 12), we shall never be able to penetrate their essence. This knowledge is reserved for heaven, where, seeing God face to face, we shall also see those things which are now concealed from us.

What signification am I then to affix to this expression *absurd* doctrine? A doctrine, do you imply, which is opposed to the light of reason? If so, I agree with you; because the light of reason being a light of truth, given to us by God for the purpose of understanding natural truths, nothing can be contrary to it without being false and absurd. But how do you prove that any doctrine taught by the Catholic Church is contrary to right reason? To demonstrate this, it is necessary to understand the truth thoroughly, and, indeed, to penetrate its essence: otherwise, how can we conclude whether it be opposed to right reason or not? We say that a square triangle is contrary to the light of reason, because, knowing perfectly well what constitutes a triangle and what a square, we distinctly see that one is incompatible with the other. Now, do you know the essence of those truths of the Catholic Church which you pronounce to be absurd? Have you sufficient understanding to penetrate thoroughly those sublime truths and develope their preternatural character? The great mystery of the real presence of Christ in the blessed sacrament, I will select as an example. The Catholic Church teaches that Christ is really present in the blessed eucharist under the species of bread and wine. Protestants condemn this doctrine as absurd: and that the body of Christ should be in heaven and on millions of altars at the same time, they consider an impossibility. Strictly adhering to reason, may I not thus retort,—do you thoroughly understand the nature of Christ's glorified body? Can you assert that you are able to penetrate into the essence

thereof? St. Paul says, that the glorified body is incorruptible (1 *Cor.* xv. 53), and becomes like a spiritual substance. (*ibid.* 44.) In the gospel of St. John, we read that our Lord, after his resurrection from the dead, appeared in his glorified body, in the room where his disciples were assembled, the doors being shut. (xx.26.) In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that our Redeemer appeared in person to St. Paul. (ix. 5.) Now, have you a perfect knowledge of the nature of such a body? Can you penetrate perfectly into its properties, so as to understand what is in accordance with its nature, or what is repugnant thereto? The most profound philosophers have not yet arrived at a knowledge of the essence of that which constitutes the corporeal substance of this world. Certain they are, that those accidents which strike our senses, cannot exist without some force to which they adhere; but the nature of this power is entirely unknown to them. Now, if it be impossible to know what constitutes the essence of the corporeal substance of this world, how is it possible to know what constitutes the substance of the *glorified* body of Christ? And if it be impossible to know what constitutes its essence, why should it be said that the mystery of the real presence is contrary to right reason? What I have said regarding this mystery is applicable to every mystery which is taught by the Catholic Church. How is it possible to know the essence of things which are in themselves mysterious? And if their essence is unknown to us, why condemn them as being repugnant to right reason? The only mode of acting in matters connected with religion, if we would act prudently, is to ascertain whether the doctrine proposed to us comes from God: having this security, we need not make

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further inquiry, but believe with docility, and captivate our understanding to the obedience of faith, bearing in mind the words of St. Paul: "The word of the cross to them, indeed, that perish, is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is to us, it is the power of God. For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For seeing that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God; it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching, to save them that believe." (1 Cor. i. 18-21.) "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

"Admitting the existence of a God, whose infinite wisdom knows more than the mind of man can comprehend; whose infinite power can do more than man can conceive possible; whose infinite goodness surpasses all understanding; reason may exert her powers in demonstrating, from these admitted principles, that *if* this great God reveal or manifest any thing relating to the perfections of his nature, or to his own works or designs in favour of man, what he reveals must be most certainly *true*; because, being *infinitely* wise, he knows all things *as they are in themselves*; and, being *infinitely* true and good, he cannot deceive us by making any declaration contrary to what he knows to be true. Again, reason may demonstrate, that it is most reasonable to believe, with a firm conviction of mind, whatever God *has* revealed; because it is reasonable to believe most firmly whatever is certainly *true*; and whatever God has revealed is most certainly *true*.

"It then only remains to inquire whether, in fact, Almighty God *has* revealed any thing to man, and *what* he has revealed.

"But when reason has discovered and ascertained the *fact* of divine revelation, there she must pause. Reason has indeed a right to be satisfied that God *has spoken*. But when it is made certain, by satisfactory extrinsic evidence, that he *has really spoken*; reason has no right, she is neither qualified nor competent, to sit in judgment on the TRUTH OR JUSTICE of *what God has taught or commanded*. Reason herself teaches, that it is the duty of man to do homage to the truth and veracity of God, by submitting his understanding to the obedience of faith, and by *believing* implicitly and firmly *whatever God has revealed*; as it is his duty to do homage to the wisdom and justice of God, by submitting his will to the obedience of the divine law, and by faithfully *doing whatever God has commanded*." (Poynter's *Christianity*, part 1, c. 4.).

PROTESTANT.—Admitting that among the various dogmas of the Catholic Church there be *no absurdity*, still, will any man be bold enough to deny that some doctrinal points are impious, and injurious to the Godhead—that christians have to pray, for instance, to images and relics, and worship them for God—that the Virgin Mary is to be equally adored with, and even more than Jesus Christ—that the saints in heaven are constituted redeemers of the world, and that the Pope may deal forth his dispensations to christians, and thus empower them to commit perjury, and to infringe all laws, human and divine, with absolute impunity?

CATHOLIC.—Oh! when will Protestants desist from disingenuous and unworthy misrepresentation, distortion and slander? I observe Protes-

tants, with but few honourable exceptions, repeatedly infringing that express command of the Deity: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." (*Deut.* v. 20.) Prejudice is ever ready to add supposition to supposition, unwearied in creating the strangest inconsistencies, and prolific in generating the most ingenious devices for the professed purpose of preventing men from seeing the real state of the question, and receiving truth unmasked and undisguised. During the space of three hundred years, the Catholics of this realm have declared their real tenets of faith, and Protestants have discredited these declarations. For three hundred years have Catholic books containing their doctrines been published, and Protestants have refused to open them. Then to what have they listened? To the productions of slander and the fabrications of calumny. What works have they perused and patronised? The efforts of interested party-spirit, that perpetually issue forth from the press, under the shape either of pamphlet or romance. Now, in the name of common honesty and truth, I would invite the enemies of the Catholic Church to hear attentively and mark well these solemnly emphatic declarations, that every Catholic can most conscientiously make, concerning those impious doctrines which are most unfairly attributed to them.

"Cursed is he who commits idolatry, who prays to images or relics, or worships them for God.

"Cursed is every goddess worshipper, who believes the Virgin Mary to be more than a creature, who adores her or puts his trust in her equally to God, who believes her above or like her Son.

"Cursed is he who believes the saints in heaven to be his redeemers, who prays to them as

such, or who gives God's honor to them, or to any creature whatsoever."

Cursed is he who worships any bread as God, or believes that the substance of bread and wine may be changed into the soul or divinity of Jesus Christ.

"Cursed is he who believes that priests can forgive sins, whether the sinner repent or not, or that there is any power on earth or in heaven that can forgive sins, without a hearty repentance and serious purpose of amendment.

"Cursed is he who believes that, independent of the merits and passion of Christ, he can obtain salvation by his own good works, or make condign satisfaction for the guilt of his sins, or the eternal pains due to them.

"Cursed is he who contemns the word of God, or who hides it from the people in order to keep them from the knowledge of their duty, and to preserve them in ignorance and error.

"Cursed is he who leaves the commandments of God to observe the constitutions of men.

"Cursed is he who omits any of the ten commandments, or keeps the people from the knowledge of any one of them, to the end that they may not discover the truth.

"Cursed is he who preaches to the people in an unknown tongue, such as they understand not, or uses any other means to keep them in ignorance.

"Cursed is he who believes that the Pope can give to any one, upon any occasion whatever, dispensations to lie or swear falsely, or that it is lawful for any one at the last hour to protest himself innocent if he be guilty.

"Cursed is he who encourages sin, or teaches men to defer the amendment of their lives, on presumption of a death-bed repentance.

"Cursed is he who places religion in nothing

but pompous shows and ceremonies, and who teaches not the people to serve God in spirit and in truth.

“Cursed is he who loves or promotes cruelty, who teaches people to be bloody-minded and to lay aside the meekness of Jesus Christ.

“Cursed is he who teaches it to be lawful to do any wicked thing, though it be for the interest and good of Mother Church, or that any evil action may be done that good may ensue.”

Do you wonder that Catholics can seriously, and without any qualms of conscience utter all these curses? “Yes, they can, and are ready to do so whenever, and as often as it may be required of them. When Protestants, therefore, find that Catholics utterly reject the doctrines imputed to them, and this too in the most solemn manner, ought they not to bring forward some documents equally solemn against them? And can they do so? No, they cannot.” (*Geraldine*, vol. ii. chap. 6.)

Before we finally conclude this subject, respecting the charge which Protestants bring against the Catholic Church of following impious doctrines, it may not be amiss to observe, that this charge is unquestionably applicable to the Protestant religion, because the principle of private judgment, adopted by the leaders of the reformation, opens an extensive field for novelties and absurdities of every kind, which must infallibly prove injurious to God, and destructive to all true genuine christian piety.

PROTESTANT.—Protestants receive all that is contained in the holy scripture; therefore, it is impossible that they broach any doctrine injurious to God, and detrimental to piety.

CATHOLIC.—If Protestants receive whatever is

contained in the holy scripture, whence comes it that they observe many points as necessary which are not warranted by any text of scripture, and neglect others which are clearly supported by it? Protestants are to keep as holy the Sunday, or the first day of the week, and this duty is universally regarded as a matter of conscientious obligation; yet this practice, so far from being warranted by scripture, is expressly repugnant to the letter of divine law, which directs the Jewish sabbath, or the Saturday, to be sanctified. Protestants generally believe the validity of baptism administered to children before they reach the age of reason; yet this belief, far from being supported by scripture, is apparently opposed to it, since those words of our Lord, in St. Mark: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned" (xvi. 16), seem to require faith from all those who are to be baptized, as an absolute and indispensable condition for receiving that sacrament. By a decree dictated by the Holy Ghost, it is enjoined to all christians to abstain from blood; and still Protestants make no difficulty of violating, in their ordinary repasts, a law thus solemnly published.

If Protestants receive whatever is contained in holy scripture, why do they not agree among themselves respecting the number of the sacred books? Luther, the great patriarch of the reformation, exploded the epistle of St. James, in terms of indignant contempt. (*Præf. in Epist.*) The manner in which he spoke of the book of Ecclesiastes was so extremely childish, and so marked with ribaldry, that even his intimate friends were disgusted. Still both these books are held as sacred and canonical by other Protestants. How then is it possible that they receive all that is contained in scripture, since they differ amongst themselves

concerning the number of the sacred writings?

If Protestants receive whatever is contained in the holy scripture, what reasons can be alleged for the great discrepancy existing in their belief, since what is rejected by some as error is believed by others as truth? How can they assert that they receive all that is contained in the scriptures, since upon the most substantial points of christian doctrine they contradict each other? How can the Socinians, for instance, and the Methodists, the Quakers and the Calvinists, receive all that is contained in the scripture, since they contradict each other in the momentous points of doctrine concerning the trinity and baptism? Does the holy scripture contradict itself? Can the God of truth teach contradictory doctrines?

Protestants, therefore, far from receiving all that is really contained in the holy scripture, receive the words of that venerable document, but overlook, however, their meaning. In a similar manner, the English Protestant calendar exhibits a long catalogue of vigils, fasts and days of abstinence, with as much rigour as is observed in the Catholic Church: but all this totally disappears in their practice. Even their writers frequently ridicule these ancient observances as idle and superstitious. With equal consistency, the Jews carefully preserve the letter of the prophecies, and leave to the christians the task of making the application. Certainly, to admit the words of an instrument, and to deny or overlook the natural and obvious meaning, is to build with one hand and to destroy with another.

PROTESTANT.—Whatever be the case concerning the doctrines of the dissenting sects, certain it is, that the tenets of the Church of England are those of the holy scripture and of the ancient Church; and that they were approved in the four

first councils, which are the only general councils that were ever assembled in the Church of Christ.

CATHOLIC.—As you speak in particular of the doctrines of the English Church, stating that they are conformable to those of holy writ and of the ancient Church, I most willingly turn my attention to this interesting point. Previously, however, to entering on this subject, there are some questions I would ask.

1. Why do Protestants recur to the particular testimony of the ancient Church, and not to the general testimony of the Church of Christ, for supporting the doctrines of their religion? Has not Jesus Christ built his Church upon a *rock*, and promised that the gates of hell should never prevail against her? Why, then, do Protestants recur only to the testimony of the ancient Church? Would not their acting in this manner lead one to suppose that their object is the better to conceal their errors? This is a strange mode of proceeding, indeed!

“If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,
Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend:
If languages, and copies, all cry: No!
Somebody proved it centuries ago.”—*Cowper*.

2. I would know, in the second place, whether Protestants look on the ancient Church as fallible or infallible. What is your opinion on this subject? Was the ancient Church infallible in framing those venerable documents, to which, in support of their doctrines, Protestants apply?

If you answer that she was fallible, then all authority of the ancient Church vanishes, and, consequently, all appeal to the same is of little or no avail.

For why apply, let me ask, to a fallible tribunal, which may have deviated from truth? If the only motive for believing the documents of the ancient Church is on account of their accordance with the holy scripture, why refer to them? Have we not the holy scripture in our hand? If you maintain that the ancient Church was infallible, then I would request a reply to the following interrogatories:—1. How is it proved that Christ's promises to be with his Church until the end of the world are to be limited to the lapse of some certain centuries—that this Church was to be the pillar and foundation of truth only for a certain limited period—that those pastors and doctors, whom Christ established in his Church for the purpose of confirming the faithful in the doctrine of truth to the consummation of the saints, for the work of the ministry and the edification of the body of Christ, were to exist only for a definite time? 2. Why did Christ divest his Church of the privilege of infallibility after the sixth or seventh century? Has not the Church to form the object of his special complacency until the end of ages? Is not the Church at all periods his beloved spouse, in whom he is infinitely pleased? Does not the Church require at all times the gift of infallibility for teaching and preserving the doctrine of her spouse inviolate until the end of the world? 3. Until what period did the Church of Christ enjoy the privilege of infallibility? This question must be answered; as it is of the highest importance to know that epoch exactly, in order to distinguish between those documents which proceeded from an infallible authority, and those emanating from a fallible source, and which, consequently, may be faulty and incorrect.

Other questions, respecting the four first councils, I would also ask. Why do Protestants style

them the only general councils that were ever assembled in the Church of Christ? If because they were infallible in their decisions, then are they expected to answer the above stated difficulties against the infallibility of the ancient Church only. If because they were formed by the generality of bishops, then they must acknowledge as general all those which have been held in the Roman Catholic Church, including the last, which was assembled in the city of Trent, because they contain the decisions of bishops summoned together from every part of the christian world. If because they followed the scripture, then I ask again, who has to judge of their conformity with the holy scripture, in order to decide with certainty that they are truly general councils, or not? According to their great leading principle, every individual is entitled to examine and decide this question. How, then, can they denominate them general councils, since their authority depends on the private judgment of every one? Moreover, how can Protestants apply to any council of the Church, when their religion has originated in the rejection of every authority in matters of faith, except that of the holy scripture? Does not this proceeding imply a manifest opposition to their principle? To their religion, I think, these lines of the poet very appropriate—

“She cries aloud for aid
To Church and Councils, whom she first betrayed.”
Dryden.

But, waiving all these difficulties, let us come to the point that concerns the doctrines of the Church of England. In the first place, how can this Church, composed of people of a particular nation, adhering to the king of England as to their spiritual head, lay any claim to the pure

doctrines of the Church of Christ? If the authority of his Church was vested in the apostles and their lawful successors, by what unaccountable change could that spiritual power be claimed by civil potentates, so that a layman, a boy, and a woman, should successively usurp the whole authority emanating from Christ? Let it be ever remembered that the power by which the Church of Christ is governed proceeds from him, through the apostles and their legitimate successors only. Those founders of the christian religion never applied to the Roman emperors, to the councils, the pretors, or to any civil agent whatever, for a commission to teach: they acted by virtue of the divine mission, which they received from their heavenly master. The only legitimate interference of civil governors in ecclesiastical concerns was when, at subsequent periods, they received and sustained the character of protectors and defenders of the Church, with subordination to her legitimate authority. Any mission, therefore, to teach, to instruct, and to perform the whole circle of pastoral duties, derived either from the people or from the highest authority of the state, can be considered only as a civil licence, and, of its own nature, cannot contain an atom of that spiritual authority which Christ bequeathed to his Church.

Now let us examine, in particular, the doctrines of the English Church, and see whether they bear that conformity to those of the holy scripture and of the ancient Church which Protestants attribute to them. What are those doctrines? The alterations which the English Church underwent in points of faith have been so frequent, that I think no one can satisfactorily answer this question. Respecting that most important point of the real presence of Christ in the eucharist, for instance, it

is well known that the first communion service of the Church of England, as drawn up by Cranmer, Ridley, and other Protestant bishops, who are looked upon as the fathers of the English Church, clearly expresses that "the whole body of Christ is received under each particle of the sacrament." Afterwards, when the Calvinistic doctrine partly prevailed, and the thirty-nine articles of religion, drawn up by the same prelates, were published, the real presence was there expressly denied, and the impossibility of that belief explained by the circumstance of Christ's ascension in his glorified body to heaven. Ten years after, Queen Elizabeth, who was then on the throne, leaning to the former belief, the passage in the book of common prayer which declares against the real presence was expunged, and the words left in their original Catholic state. So they remained during the next hundred years, until the Restoration, when, amongst many alterations which then took place, the doctrine against the real presence and adoration of the blessed sacrament was again restored as it stands at present.

Where, then, are we to find the genuine doctrine of the English Church, since she has varied so many times in points of faith? Let us now confine ourselves to her present state, and see whether at least her present doctrines have that conformity with the holy scripture and the belief of the ancient Church which Protestants attribute to them. But are we not still involved in chaos? Is not the English Church split into three great parties, of High Church, Low Church, and Pusyite Church, which disagree amongst themselves on the most essential points of doctrine?

Now, pray tell me whether the doctrine of the English Church be constituted according to the tenets of these different parties collectively, or of only one of them.

PROTESTANT.—It is constituted of one party only, because it is impossible that tenets which contradict each other can be all true and conformable to those of holy writ and of the ancient Church.

CATHOLIC.—Granted. How is that party's doctrine, which constitutes the doctrine of the English Church, to be known?

PROTESTANT.—By comparing the different doctrines with those of the holy scripture and of the ancient Church. Those which are conformable to the sacred documents of the holy writ and of the ancient Church, are the genuine doctrines of the Church of England: the others are inventions of men.

CATHOLIC.—Where are we, my good friend, at this point? Are we not fallen into a very intricate labyrinth? You remember the question at issue. We are endeavouring to discover the doctrine of the Church of England, in order to see whether it be conformable to the holy scripture and to the belief of the ancient Church, as you maintain it to be. Therefore, to say that such doctrine must be known by comparing the different tenets of the three parties into which the English Church is divided with the doctrine of the holy scripture and of the ancient Church, is nothing less than moving in a vicious circle. And if we leave this means of discovering the doctrine of the English Church, what means of discovery will remain? Supposing, however, that the doctrine of the English Church be that to which the High Church adheres, and which is contained in the thirty-nine articles, I ask first, are there many who believe *all* these articles? This question is not superfluous, because the real doctrine of Christ is to be believed through all the

world until the consummation of ages: and therefore, it were useless to treat of the articles of the English Church were they not universally believed. Are there many who believe in all these articles? From what is attested by Protestants themselves, even by Protestant clergymen, there are very few who believe all these articles. How then is it possible that such doctrines be conformable to those of holy scripture and of the ancient Church, to which a great number of christians throughout the world shall adhere until the consummation of ages?

The second question which I wish you to answer, is, by whose commission were these articles of faith drawn up? We are assured by history, that this was done by a commission of king Edward VI. But how can they be conformable to holy scripture and to the belief of the ancient Church, which loudly proclaim that the authority of the Church of Christ has been vested in the apostles and their lawful successors, and that the doctrines of the same Church have been spread all over the world, not only without any commission of temporal powers, but also in opposition to their decrees, and in defiance of their mightiest efforts to suppress the promulgation thereof?

Finally, let us see what are these articles. By the 35th of these articles, a certain book of homilies is commended, as containing pious and salutary doctrine, and is directed to be read carefully and distinctly, so as to be understood by the people. In one of these homilies occurs the following passage: "Laity, and clergy, learned, and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women and children, of the whole of christendom, had been at once drowned in abominable idolatry; and that for the space of eight hundred years and

more." (*Homily against the Peril of Idolatry.*) Gracious God! What can be found more contrary to the doctrine of the holy scripture and of the ancient Church than this article? Do not both scripture and christian antiquity teach us, on the clearest testimonies, that Christ's Church is built on a rock, and that she will last until the end of the world, notwithstanding all the rage and the efforts of hell to demolish her? How can this doctrine be reconciled with the appalling doctrine, that the whole of christendom had been at once drowned in abominable idolatry, and that for the space of eight hundred years and more?

Be assured, my friend, I am quite weary of witnessing the inconsistency of the Protestant religion. Where is that *consummate wisdom*, of which Protestants boast against Catholics? For my part, nothing appears more incoherent and preposterous than the Protestant Church.

Thus far have I proceeded, actuated, believe me, through love of truth, without the remotest idea of censuring those sensible and respectable men who have the misfortune of adhering to the Protestant religion through defect of education rather than perversity of will, in which position stands, I believe, the individual whom I have the honor of addressing.

FIFTH DIALOGUE.

PROTESTANT.—The love of truth obliges me to acknowledge that your remarks on the subject at issue are neither superfluous nor useless. Many charges which Protestants are accustomed to level against Catholics, I see distinctly, have little or no foundation.

CATHOLIC.—Do the rays of divine truth at length enlighten your mind? Thank him, from whom proceeds every perfect gift, and omit no exertion, I entreat you, to profit by it. Walk whilst you have the light, that you may be a child of light. Implore earnestly our Lord, who is the true light, to accomplish that work which he has begun, by receiving you into his kingdom, which is a kingdom of light.

PROTESTANT.—I am prepared to do so. No longer can I remain in this bewilderment of mind. Grant me, gracious God! to know the truth, thou who art all truth. Spare me until I know this truth; then take me to thyself.

CATHOLIC.—Repose entire confidence in Almighty God. A humble heart and a sincere mind God will not despise. If the overwhelming majority of the world is plunged in the shadow of death, it is because men prefer darkness to light. They who hunger and thirst after justice are declared blessed by our Lord, and it is said they will be filled. Could I be of the slightest benefit to you, I shall esteem myself most happy, and therefore you may at all times command my services.

PROTESTANT.—I feel your excessive kindness, and will avail myself of this opportunity to request you would speak again on the authority of the Church of Christ. Were I sure that Christ established in his Church such authority as Catholics admit, I would not hesitate a moment to abandon the Protestant Church, and to enrol myself under her banner. Your remarks on this subject are striking indeed; but as they were directed to prove rather the existence than the infallibility of an external authority in the Church of Christ, I am anxious to hear some solid reasons, bearing immediately on that one single point, the *infallibility* of such authority. Nothing, it appears to me, but an absolute and thorough conviction of such infallibility, could ever induce a sensible man to subject himself to her, so as to receive her code of faith, and obsequiously follow her guidance.

CATHOLIC.—My observations, it is true, regarding the authority of the Church of Christ, have been especially directed to prove the existence of such authority; yet, if we consider them well, we shall see that they may be equally and successfully applied to demonstrate her infallibility. How could the faithful be obliged to hear the Church, and to regard all who disobey her as heathens and publicans, were she not infallible in her decisions? How could the Church of Christ be the pillar and foundation of truth, were she not steady in holding the doctrine of Christ? How could the unity of faith be preserved in the Church of Christ until the end of the world, unless she were free from the possibility of falling into error? How could the pastors of the Church comply with their duties of confirming the faithful in the faith and preserving them from all error, unless they themselves

were firmly established in truth? How could the pastors of the Church preach the gospel to all creatures, were they not firm in holding the real doctrine of Christ until the end of the world? How are we to understand those words of Christ, addressed to the pastors of his Church: "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.....Teach ye all nations.....And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.....He (the Father) shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever.....He will teach you all things;" did they not possess infallibility in matters of faith?

Besides these reasons, which are undoubtedly weighty and convincing, there are others not less forcible.

1. Do you not admit that the Church of Christ must be perpetual, or, in other words, enduring to the end of the world?

PROTESTANT.—Unquestionably; because it is clear from scripture, that the Church of Christ is the city of the Lord of hosts, the city of our Lord; God has established it for ever. She is the kingdom of the Almighty. God has raised it, and it shall never be destroyed. The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but the clemency of God shall not depart from his Church, neither shall the covenant of his peace be removed from her. She is the great building raised upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. She is the beloved spouse, in whom the heavenly bridegroom is well pleased: he will be with her all days even to the end of the world. Hence I conclude, that there was, is, and shall endure to

the consummation of the world, a Church of Christ ever one and the same.

CATHOLIC.—But how could the Church of Christ be perpetual, were she not infallible in matters of faith? How could she continue until the consummation of ages, were she capable of falling into error? How could she maintain *supernatural* truths until the end of the world, unassisted by *supernatural* light? If the pastors of the Church were fallible, they might certainly fall into error any moment; and the faithful, being obliged by the commandment of God to obey their pastors and to follow their doctrines, they also would be exposed to similar danger of falling continually into error. Thus, the whole Church of Christ might fall into error any moment, the gates of hell could prevail against her, and the promise of Christ fail.

2. We read, in the monuments of christian antiquity, that as soon as the pastors of the Church issued any decree of faith, it was immediately to be regarded by her children as a certain and infallible truth, and perfect submission was required of them under pain of being considered as heathens and publicans. The adversaries of the dogma, without being allowed to define, argue, or defend their opinions, were called upon to subscribe some formula of faith, condemnatory of or contradictory to their errors. Thus, the fathers of the Council of Nice, which was convened to condemn the doctrines of Arius, stating the decrees or doctrines of faith, say: "The Church of God teaches this:" which words clearly signify, that such doctrines were indubitably true, and that all, either present or absent, were bound to accept of them. The principle followed on this occasion was continued

in every subsequent council of which we have any notice in ecclesiastical history. The moment that any decree or definition of faith was issued by the Fathers, it was to be regarded as necessarily true, and no appeal was to be allowed, no argument admitted, that might seem directed to set aside that ground of infallible authority. Whence this persuasion and proceeding of the ancient Church, which, according to Protestants themselves, was pure and holy in her doctrines, if the pastors of the Church of Christ are not endued with infallibility in matters of faith?

3. St. Irenæus, who was the ornament of the second age, speaking of his master St. Polycarp, records that he visited Rome during the pontificate of Anicetus, and that he reclaimed many of the partisans of Valentinus and Marcion; "publishing aloud," adds he, "that the only truth which he had learnt from the apostles was that taught by the Church." (See *St. Irenæus*, lib. iii. cap. 3-4.)

The great St. Cyprian, adverting to the words of St. Peter to our Redeemer, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life," thus expresses himself: "St. Peter, upon whom the Church was built, speaks here, and in the name of the Church teaches and declares, that although the multitude, from stubbornness and pride, should desert their faith, yet the Church does not fall off from Christ." (*Epist. ad Florent.*) In his celebrated treatise on the unity of the Church, he speaks in terms more explicit, saying: "The spouse of Christ cannot become an adulteress. She is undefiled, she is pure; she knows but one house; she preserves the sanctity of one chamber with exemplary modesty; she it is who guards us for God; who reserves the children whom she has brought forth for an eternal crown. Whoever

separates from the Church, and joins an adulteress, is excluded from the promises made by Christ to the Church; nor will he obtain the rewards of Christ who leaves the Church of Christ: he is an alien; he is a profane man; he is an enemy. He cannot have God for his father who has not the Church for his mother." (*De Unit. Eccles.*)

St. Augustine, being come to the part relating to the Church in explaining the Creed of the Catechumens, writes in the following terms:—"Here is pointed out God and his temple. The temple of God is holy, says the apostle, which you are. This is the holy Church, the one Church; the true Church, the Catholic Church, combating all heresies. Fight she can, but she can never be subdued. All heresies are gone out from her, like useless branches cut from the vine. But she remains in her root, in her vine, in her charity. The gates of hell can never prevail against her." (*Ad Catech. lib. i.*)

These and other remarks of the Fathers, stating that the Church of Christ will be firm in truth until the end of the world, are very forcible indeed for supporting the infallibility of that visible authority which Christ established in his Church; for how could the Church of Christ be firm in truth until the consummation of ages, if her pastors, from whom the faithful have to learn the doctrine of truth, could ever fall into error?

4. Another reason, demonstrating the infallibility of the Church of Christ, arises from the necessity of admitting an infallible authority for knowing the inspiration of scripture. The inspiration of any book whatever, as you know, consists in its being dictated by our Lord; so that man, under inspiration, is a pure instrument in writing what our Lord speaks to him. Inspiration, then, is a

fact all *internal* and *supernatural*, by which the God of all truth enlightens the mind of man, and excites his will to write what he dictates. Hence, the knowledge of any book as divinely inspired, requires the supernatural testimony of God, or of those who are supernaturally enlightened by God on this subject. How is it possible to ascertain from the scripture itself, or from the external testimony of men unassisted by the Holy Ghost, that the sacred volume really contains the word of God? The epistles of St. Barnaby, of St. Clement, of St. Ignatius, breathe an apostolical spirit, and are not apparently inferior to the sacred writings: how are we to ascertain that they are not to be considered as a part of the written word of God? Many books of scripture are rejected by Protestants as apocryphal: the infidel discards the whole with scorn and derision: then, by what means are we to establish their authority as *containing* the divine word? By no other than the authority of that Church, which our Redeemer has commanded us to hear, to which he promised the assistance of his Holy Spirit until the end of the world, and which St. Paul pronounces to be "the pillar and foundation of truth." "What will you gain," asks Tertullian, "by recurring to scripture, when one denies what the other asserts? Learn rather who it is that possesses the faith of Christ, to whom the scriptures belong; from whom, by whom, and when that faith was delivered by which we are made christians. For where the truth of christian discipline and faith is found, there is the truth of scripture, and of the interpretation of it, and of all christian traditions.....That doctrine is evidently true which was first delivered: on the contrary, that is false which is of later date. This maxim stands immoveable against the attempts of all late heresies. Let such, then, produce the origin of

their churches: let them show the succession of their bishops from the apostles or their disciples. If you live near Italy, you see before your eyes the Roman Church: happy church! to which the apostles have left the inheritance of their doctrine with their blood! where Peter was crucified, like his master; where Paul was beheaded, like the Baptist! If this be so, it is plain, as we have said, that heretics are not to be allowed to appeal to scripture, since they have no claim to it. Hence, it is proper to address them as follows:—*Who are you? Whence do you come? What business have you, strangers, with my property? By what right are you, Marcion, felling my trees? By what authority are you, Valentine, turning the course of my streams? Under what pretence are you, Appelles, removing my land-marks? The estate is mine. I have the ancient, the prior possession of it. I have the title deeds delivered to me by the original proprietors. I am the heir of the apostles; they have made their will in my favour, while they disinherited and discarded you as strangers and enemies.*" (*De Præscrip. adv. Hæres.*) Hence, the great St. Augustine, in the clearest terms, says: "I would not believe the gospel, were I not induced to do so by the authority of the Catholic Church." (*Contra epist. Fundam. c. 5.*)

PROTESTANT.—Protestants think they possess the same means of determining the inspiration of scriptures as Catholics; namely, the concurrent testimony of antiquity. Had the Roman Catholic Church never existed, they think they would have had historical tradition for deciding on this subject no less than at present. They believe that such testimony is supported not only by all christianity, but also by the heathens themselves, whose writers testify great respect for the sacred books. They

appeal, in defence of their cause, to the testimony of the Jews, to whom the oracles of God were delivered, and assert that such testimony is most favourable to them, and in direct contradiction to the Catholic Church, concerning the apocryphal books, which are not to be found in the Jewish canon. Finally, they say that the canon of the Catholic Church cannot be a true one, because it was not formed till the sixteenth century, and that councils and fathers rejected some of the books contained therein.

CATHOLIC.—What do you understand by that *concurrent testimony of antiquity* which you mention as the great means of deciding this question? From your principle of fallibility, it is clear that you understand by it the pure testimony of men, and consequently a mere human authority. But how can this testimony possess any weight concerning the inspiration of scripture, which is an *internal* and *supernatural* fact? I see clearly how men, without supernatural light, can know the existence of a fact which is subjected to their senses, or accommodated to their reason; but I cannot understand how they can attain the knowledge of a fact beyond the sphere of their senses, and above the powers of natural understanding, without being enlightened from above.

Your assertion, that if the Roman Catholic Church had never existed, we should have had, nevertheless, the historical tradition of testimony, by which to ascertain the inspiration of the books of scripture, according to my humble opinion, is equivalent to the following:—If the historical tradition of testimony, by which the inspiration of the books of scripture is ascertained, had never existed, we should have had, nevertheless, this testimony. And why? Because the historical

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tradition here mentioned, respecting the books of the new testament, has originated from the testimony of the Roman Catholic Church, and respecting those of the old testament, has been supported and preserved in its purity by this same Church. I beg you will bear in mind, that all the general councils, with all the Roman Pontiffs from St. Peter down to the present, Gregory XVI., and all the pastors and faithful adhering to them, belong to the Roman Catholic Church. What, then, would have become of that historical tradition of testimony respecting the inspiration of the scriptures, had the Roman Catholic Church never existed? Assuredly, had not the apostles and their successors in the ministry, assisted by the Holy Ghost, proposed to the faithful the divine writings, there would not have been that *concurrent* testimony for their inspiration which you mention.

The heathens and infidels, far from bearing testimony to the inspiration of the scriptures, discard them, and ridicule those that regard them as divine writings. True it is, that the authority of the sacred books, as *historical records*, is supported also by their testimony; but they do not give them the least support in proof of their inspiration.

I know not what books are at present rejected by the Jews, who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death; but I know that those of the old testament which you call apocryphal, were held in great veneration by the Jewish nation as long as it remained the people of God, that they are cited in the new testament as the other sacred books, and that the Church of Christ, which is "the pillar and foundation of truth," bears testimony to their divine inspiration. We grant it to be perfectly clear that the oracles of God were delivered to the Jews; but that these books were not delivered as such, is a point which rests upon

the unsupported assertion of Protestants. These books formed not indeed a part of the Jewish canon; but such canon was collected in the time of Esdras, several hundred years before some of those productions had their existence. As to those already existing at that time, whence is it proved that they had, prior to that period, arrived at the knowledge of the synagogue? Is not the contrary opinion very probable, considering, on the one hand, the great difficulty which then existed in the diffusion of books, and, on the other, the places in which they were written?

The canon of the Roman Catholic Church was formed in the earliest ages; and therefore, to assert that it was not collected till the sixteenth century, and that councils and fathers rejected some of the books contained therein, is groundless and incorrect. The great St. Augustine, in enumerating the parts of the sacred scriptures, mentions those canonical books which the Catholic Church admits in these days. (*St. Aug. de Doct. Chris.* lib. ii. cap. 8.) In the third council of Carthage, held in 397, at which this great prelate and doctor assisted, the same catalogue of books is inserted as forming the canon of scripture. (*Vide Conc. Carth.* 3. cap. 47.) The decision of this council, though only a national council, may be justly considered as the voice of the whole Church, for it was numerously attended: Aurelius, primate of all Africa, presided: the illustrious St. Augustine assisted at it, and sanctioned the proceedings with his signature; the great and eminent pontiffs at that period adopted its decree on this question; and the Catholic Church, in a general council, subsequently confirmed the decision.

In addition to these distinguished authorities, let me adduce that of the Greek Church. In the various attestations procured by order of Louis XIV.,

and published by his authority, we see those books received as canonical which the English Church regards as apocryphal and spurious. In the attestation signed by seven bishops of that Church, July 18, 1671, we have the following passage:—"We affirm that the books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the Macchabees, constitute a part of the holy scripture." Now, who can explain how such a portion of christians as constitute the Greek Church, separated, as they have been, from the great body of the Mother Church for 900 years, happen to coincide with the Roman Catholic Church, except we admit that both parties had considered their belief on the subject as a part of apostolical tradition? There could be no collusion between parties of this description. Their agreement, therefore, on the catalogue of the scriptures, forms an argument altogether irrefragable.

The Roman Catholic Church, in deciding on the inspiration of the scripture, does not confer on any book a divine authority of which it was not radically possessed, but only declares and proposes to the faithful those books which are invested with such authority. A book is divine, because it is inspired by God; and Catholics know it to be inspired, because their pastors, assisted by the Holy Ghost, declare it to be so. You cannot understand how the Catholic Church can know divine books by the supernatural assistance of God, nor can I understand how she can know them otherwise; "For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God, no man knoweth but the spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii. 11.)

PROTESTANT.—How can the Roman Catholic Church prove her infallibility from the scripture,

if the scripture cannot be known to be the word of God unless by her authority? Protestants consider this proceeding of the Catholic Church as a vicious circle and absolute sophistry.

CATHOLIC.—Let us see whether this charge of sophistry be more applicable to the Roman Catholic or to the Protestant Church. It is a fact, supported by indisputable evidence, that the holy scriptures, and particularly the New Testament, are invested, as *historical books*, with the highest characters of *veracity*. This fact is admitted even by the professed opponents of christianity, by Celsus, Julian, Porphyrius, who, although discarding the Holy Bible as a divine work, agree, however, in receiving it as a true *historical record*. To be well acquainted with this fact, the knowledge of which is quite accommodated to our natural understanding, it is not necessary to be assisted by any supernatural light; but it will suffice to weigh well the matter by those criteria of truth, which a sound critique affords, for ascertaining the *veracity of historical facts*. Having thus ascertained the authority of the scriptures merely as *historical books*, Catholics proceed to prove by them—1st, that Jesus Christ founded, through his apostles, a Church bearing the most conspicuous characters of divinity; 2dly, that he appointed in his Church a visible, perpetual, and infallible authority. These points well established, they stop their inquiry, and, turning their attention to that infallible authority, which is the pillar and foundation of truth, learn by its ministry what is the word of God, whether written or unwritten. Is there any inconsistency in this way of reasoning? It should especially be observed, that the authority of the scriptures as *historical books*, bearing the most evident characters of vera-

city, is proved independently of the authority of the Church. Hence, to prove the infallible authority of the Church by that of the scriptures, as *bearing evident characters of veracity*, and afterwards to prove the authority of the scriptures as *divine writings* by the infallible authority of the Church, is not sophistry, but solid reasoning.

Observe, moreover, that there is another way of proving the infallible authority of the Church, independently altogether of the authority of the scriptures. From what the most accredited historians, whether christian or heathen, relate of the Christian Religion, and particularly of its doctrine so repugnant to human pride and sensuality, of the formidable obstacles which the rage of the emperors and the sophistry of philosophers have opposed to its diffusion, and of the wonderful success of its rapid propagation over all the world, through the instrumentality of the weakest and most contemptible in the sight of men, it is evidently demonstrated that such a religion is divine, and its founder the true Redeemer of the world. Certainly these, and some other motives of credibility, are evidences of a moral description; and are moreover calculated, by their number, weight, and united strength, to produce an irresistible impression on the mind. From this principle of the Divinity of the Christian Religion, we may deduce the existence of the supernatural and infallible authority of her pastors; because in such religion there must be a supernatural means for teaching the supernatural doctrines of Christ to the people, and preserving such doctrines in their purity and integrity until the end of the world—which means can be no other than the ministry of her pastors, assisted by the Holy Ghost. (See DIALOGUE I. Nos. 11, 12, 13.)

SIXTH DIALOGUE.

PROTESTANT.—I am thoroughly persuaded that there must exist in the Church of Christ an external and infallible authority for the purpose of proposing to the people the real doctrine of Christ, and preserving it in its purity until the end of the world. But how can you prove that such authority must be vested in the pastors of the Catholic Church?

CATHOLIC.—In order to establish this point, namely, that the pastors of the Catholic Church are invested with that authority, which Christ conferred on the pastors of his Church, two plain points are to be substantiated. *1st*, That our Redeemer conferred on St. Peter a real supremacy over all the members of his Church, whether pastors or faithful. *2dly*, That such supremacy was to continue with St. Peter's successors until the end of the world.

To begin with the first, we find that the Church is denominated by St. Paul "one body": but to give her this appellation without admitting a head, which is to connect and unite the various members of this mystical structure, would be an inconsistency admitting of no explanation. Moreover, did not the Almighty establish, under the Jewish dispensation, a high priest, who was to disclose and explain the difficulties of the law, maintain a supreme authority in spiritual concerns, prevent confusion and consolidate union? And was there not a succession of supreme pontiffs to carry the same sublime purposes into effect? And is the new law to be left destitute of the same resource? Is the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which was foretold, in the most elevated strains of prophecy, as

an establishment subsisting for ever, to be abandoned to the wayward fancy of individuals without a head, a chief governor, a supreme pastor? This is agreeable neither to the dictates of common sense, nor to the positive injunctions of the sacred scripture.

In the gospel of St. John, Jesus Christ says,—“I am the good shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring; and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.” (*John* x. 14-17.) But, because he was shortly to ascend to his heavenly Father, he was pleased to establish a vicar in the person of Peter, and his successors, who, in his name, and by his authority, should visibly govern and direct his Church until the end of the world, as it will appear from what follows:—

1. St. Peter having, by divine revelation, made a solemn profession of his faith in Christ's divinity, our Lord said to him:—“Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.” (*Matth.* xvi. 18-19.) In these words of our Redeemer to Peter, there are to be observed three things—

1st, That the name of Peter, by which Jesus addresses his disciple, and which he had already given to him on another occasion (*John* i. 42), signifies *rock*. Hence, our Lord here declares that he to whom he had already given the name of

Peter, signifying a rock, should be a rock indeed of invincible strength, for the support of the building of the Church, in which building he should be next to Christ himself, the chief foundation-stone, in quality of chief pastor, ruler and governor. The words of Christ to Peter, spoken in the common language of the Jews, which our Lord employed, were literally the same as if he had said in English, "Thou art a rock, and upon this rock I will build my Church;" so that, by the plain obvious meaning of these words, Peter is here declared to be the rock upon which the Church was to be built.

2dly, That the power of the keys, which is here given to Peter, means the supreme power and authority, according to that of the prophet concerning our Redeemer: "I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder, and he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." (*Is. xxii. 22.*) And also St. John says, respecting Christ—"Thus saith the Holy One and the True One, he that hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth; shutteth, and no man openeth." (*Rev. iii. 7.*) Consequently Christ, by saying to St. Peter, "To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven," manifestly communicates to him supreme power, as to his vicegerent upon earth.

3dly, That Christ declares, in language not to be misconstrued, that he will impart to the spiritual edifice, which is to be built on the person of Peter, a firmness and stability irresistible and immoveable. All these circumstances, coupled together and examined carefully and impartially, clearly indicate a degree of superiority to be invested in Peter alone.

"Let not him who deserts the chair of Peter, upon which the Church is founded," says St.

Cyprian, "hope to belong to the Church." (*Lib. de Unit.*) "It is St. Peter," writes St. Ambrose, who flourished in the fourth century, "to whom Christ said: *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.*" (In *Psalm 40.*) In another place he says, that Peter is called rock, because, as an immoveable stone, he connects and sustains the entire fabric of Christianity. (*Serm. 47.*) "Among the apostles Peter only," says St. Augustine, "deserved to hear: *Amen, I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church* : clearly, indeed, the worthy foundation-stone for establishing the people in the house of God, the supporting column, the key of heaven." (*Serm. 29, de Sanctis.*) In another passage he writes, that Peter having confessed Christ's divinity, was subsequently called Peter (or rock) upon which the Church should be built. (In *Psalm 69.*)

2. What Christ had promised to Peter before his death he conferred upon him after his resurrection; when, having heard his answer of humbleness and tender love in reply to his remarkable triple question "Lovest thou me more than these?" he said to him: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." (*John xxi.*) By the expression "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep," Christ signifies all believing in him, or the whole Church. 1st, By these words he signifies those *believing in him* : for a very common metaphor, used in scripture-language to signify the people of God, is the term *flock* or *sheep*. "Behold," says the Lord, through the prophet Ezechiel, "I myself will seek my sheep, and will visit them.....And I will bring them out from the people, and will gather them out of the countries, and will bring them to their own land : and I will feed them in the mountains of

Israel, by the rivers and in all the habitations of the land." (xxxiv. 11-13.) "We thy people," says Israel to God, "and the sheep of thy pasture will give thanks to thee for ever." (*Ps.* lxxviii. 13.) "He is the Lord our God; and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand." (*Ps.* xciv. 7.) Christ, moreover, in the tenth chapter of St. John, clearly signifies, by sheep and fold, the faithful and the Church. *2dly*, By the afore-said words Christ signifies *all believing*, and therefore the whole Church; because these words are indefinite, and involve no exception; and also on account of these words of Christ our Lord (*John* x. 15), "I lay down my life for my sheep," which signify all the members of the Church; and finally, because, otherwise, Peter would not have known what lambs and sheep he ought to feed; and, consequently, the commission of feeding delivered to him by Christ would have been unmeaning. Christ therefore, by these words, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep," conferred upon Peter the government of the whole flock, that is, he consigned to his care not only the people, but the pastors themselves.

"Christ commissions Peter to feed his sheep," says St. Cyprian. "....In order to manifest unity, he has so disposed, on his own authority, that the origin of this same unity should commence from one." (*Lib. de Unit.*) "The apostles were many," says St. Augustine, "and to one it is said: *feed my sheep.*" (*Lib. de Pastorib.* cap. 13.) "It is evident to all who are acquainted with the gospel," writes St. Gregory the Great, "that, from the words of our Lord, the care and government of the whole Church is committed to Peter, the prince of the apostles." (*Lib. v. epist.* 20.)

3. When satan sought to have the apostles in

his power, that he might sift them as wheat, Christ prayed only for St. Peter, "that his faith should not fail," and left him as the head of all his faithful to confirm his brethren. (*Luke xxii. 31.*) In this passage, Christ seems to draw a marked distinction between the designs of satan against all the apostles, and his interest for Peter. The prayer of our Saviour is offered for him especially, that his faith may not fail, and that, when he shall have risen from his fall, he may be the strengthener of his fellow apostles. Does not this conduct of Christ towards Peter imply a particular authority conferred upon him over the other apostles? Why did Christ pray for him especially, and commit to him the charge of confirming his brethren, if he was not to have any superiority over them?

"Of St Peter special care is taken by our Lord," says St. Leo, who flourished in the fifth century; "and for St. Peter's faith he supplicates, thereby implying that the state of others would be secured if the *mind of the chief* should be rendered invincible. Hence, in Peter the fortitude of all is sustained, and the aid of divine grace so ordered, that the stability which Christ imparts to Peter may be conferred by Peter upon the rest of the apostles." (*Serm. 3 in anniv. assumpt. sue ad Pontific.*)

4. The same evangelist, St. Luke, relates (c. v.) that Christ entered into Simon's ship in preference to that of James and John, in order "to teach the people out of it;" that, subsequently, a miraculous draught of fishes took place, to the utter astonishment of Peter; and that, finally, our Lord said to Peter: "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." These facts, deeply considered in reference to those where Christ promises to build his Church on Peter, and charges him to feed his

sheep, prays in particular for his firmness in faith, and gives him the commission of confirming his brethren, contain undoubtedly a mysterious meaning.

5. The apostle St. Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians (chap. i. 18), recounts that he went up, after the lapse of three years, to Jerusalem to see Peter. "It was expedient," says St. Ambrose, commenting upon this passage, "that Paul should ascend to see Peter, because Peter was the first amongst the apostles, to whom the Saviour had delegated the care of the churches." "Paul went up to see Peter," writes St. Jerome on the same passage, "not with an object of learning, but of doing homage to the first of the apostles." "As Peter," says St. John Chrysostom, in his 88th homily on St. John, "was the chief of the apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the head of the sacred college, therefore Paul went up to see him in preference to the others."

6. In the lists of the apostles given in the gospel, St. Peter is always named first in order; the others are named sometimes in one order, sometimes in another. Yet certain it is that St. Peter was not first called by Christ, for his brother Andrew was called before him, and introduced him to Christ.

7. St. Peter entered upon his supreme office as head of the Church, when he called his brethren to deliberate on electing one in the place of Judas (*Acts* i.), and also when he gave the definitive sentence in the council of Jerusalem. Before he spoke there had been much disputing (*Acts* xv. 7); but when he had spoken, all the multitude held their peace (v. 12), and submitted to his de-

cision. St. Peter was the first to preach the resurrection of Christ to the people (*Acts* ii. 14), the first to convert the Jews (*v.* 37), and the first to receive the Gentiles. (*ibid.* x. 47.)

8. The same is decidedly the doctrine of the ancient Church, and particularly of the Greek and Latin Fathers, by whom St. Peter is unanimously called the head, the chief, the ruler of the whole Church, consisting both of the pastors and the faithful. St. Hypolitus, bishop and martyr in the third century, styles Peter "the prince, the rock of faith, whom Christ our God judged blessed, the doctor of the Church, the chief of the disciples: him who holds the keys of heaven," &c. (*Orat. de consummat. mundi.*) St. Optatus Milevitanus, in the fourth century, writing against Parmenianus, says: "Thou canst not deny that St. Peter, the head of the apostles, sat on the episcopal chair in the city of Rome, in which one chair unity should be preserved by all.....and thus, whoever should raise another chair against this would be declared a schismatic and a sinner." (*lib. ii. c. 2.*) "Christ," says St. Epiphanius, "chose Peter to be the prince of the disciples." (*Hær. I. 51.*) "Out of the whole world one Peter is elected," writes St. Leo, "who is placed over the vocation of all nations, over all the apostles and all the fathers of the Church, so that, although there be among the people of God many priests and many pastors, still Peter properly governs all, and he is especially governed by Christ." (*Serm. 3 in annivers. suæ assumpt. ad Pontific.*) "The most blessed Peter," says the same holy father in another place, "chief of the apostolic order, is destined for the metropolis of the Roman empire, that the light of truth, which was to be revealed for the salvation of all, might spread more efficaciously from the head itself throughout the

whole body of the world." (*Serm. de Sanct. Apost. Pet. et Paul.*) The great St. Augustine, in his second book on baptism, chap. 1, citing the words of St. Cyprian, where he says, "The commencement proceeds from unity, and the primacy is given to Peter, that one church may be shown," writes thus : "Behold where St. Cyprian commemorates what we also have learnt in scripture, namely, that it is the apostle Peter, in whom the primacy of the apostles is pre-eminent with such exceeding grace." And, commenting on Psalm 108, he says, that "Peter is known to have borne in figure the person of the Church, on account of the primacy which he had over the disciples." The illustrious St. John Chrysostom, speaking on those words of our Lord, "Thou art Peter," says, that "Peter deserved to become for ever the fixed and indestructible foundation of the Church." (*Sermon on the Twelve Apostles.*) Lastly, St. Gregory the Great, condemning the pride of John, patriarch of Constantinople, for having assumed to himself the title of oecumenical or universal bishop, says : "The care of the whole Church was committed to Peter, and yet he is not called the universal apostle." (*Lib. v. epist. 20.*)

PROTESTANT.—The Church of Christ was to be raised, not upon the person, but the confession of Peter. The other apostles are said in the scripture to be equally the foundation and pillar of the Church with Peter : to them, as well as to Peter, was given by Christ the power of teaching, binding and loosing. Hence, the supremacy of Peter over the other apostles is not to be regarded as an undoubted fact.

CATHOLIC.—Your observation that the Church of Christ was to be raised upon the confession of

St. Peter, strictly analyzed, means nothing more than that our Redeemer, to reward the candid confession and the sublime acknowledgment made by this disciple of his divinity, elevated him to the lofty dignity of head of his Church, and, consequently, instead of forming an objection to the primacy of St. Peter, it appears on the contrary quite favourable to it.

In a general sense, it is true that all the apostles were noble and firm pillars of the great building of Christ, namely his Church; that they all received ample powers to teach and govern the faithful, with every other requisite for performing the apostolic functions: but it is no less true, that they were subordinate to Peter, to whom Christ granted a superiority of power, a pre-eminent jurisdiction. They were pillars of the Church, on account of their labours in the propagation of the gospel; but they had a positive subordination to Peter, in consequence of his having been appointed by Christ head of his Church.

St. Cyprian, the ornament of the third age, who sealed the faith with his blood in 258, writes in this remarkable manner: "It is on St. Peter alone that the Lord has founded his Church; it is to him that he confided the care of feeding his sheep; and although, after his resurrection, he gave to all his apostles an equal power, saying, 'As my Father hath sent me, so I send you,' nevertheless, in order to make all enter into unity, he established only one chair, and this chair is that of St. Peter. Doubtless the other apostles were all endued with the honor of the same functions; but, by this disposition of the Saviour, all is confined to unity, all flows from this unity. The supremacy is given to Peter, in order that there may be only one Church of Jesus Christ, and only one chair, whence truth may be extended to all the world. And is he who

will not preserve this unity to believe that he can preserve faith? Can he who resists the Church, who abandons the chair of Peter, on which the Church is founded, have the presumption to believe that he is within the Church? As for christians of all ranks, as for us above all, who are bishops and guardians of the Church, it is our duty to preserve with care, to defend this precious unity, in order to prove by this, that the episcopacy also is one and indivisible. Let no one seek by falsehood to deceive his brethren. The episcopacy, I repeat it, is one. The Church is one, as there is but one light, although the sun has an infinity of rays; and as the innumerable branches of the stately oak, united with the trunk and roots, form but one tree; so the Church has but one chief and but one principle. Woe, then, to those who separate themselves from this unity, without which there can be nothing solid and immutable in the Church! In separating they detach themselves from the principle of life; as the branches which have been lopped off from the trunk, whence they derive their nutriment, soon languish and lose all the lustre of their freshness and verdure." (*De Unit. Eccles. lib. 2.*) Origen, who lived in the same century, speaking on this subject, says: "What before was granted to Peter, seems to have been granted to all. But as something peculiarly excellent was to be granted to Peter, it was given singly to him: 'I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' This was done before the words 'whatever thou shalt bind upon earth' were uttered. And truly, if the words of the gospel be considered, we shall there find that the last words were common to Peter and the others, but that the former, spoken to Peter, imported a great distinction and superiority." (*Com. in Matth. t. iii.*) St. Jerome, who lived in the fourth century, after

observing that all the apostles received the power of binding and loosing, adds this remarkable sentence : " One among the twelve, however, is singled out, that, by the appointment of a head, the occasion of schism might be removed." (*Contra Jovin. lib. i. c. 14.*)

PROTESTANT.—There are some passages of the holy scripture, by which it appears that St. Peter was by no means superior to St. Paul. We read *1st*, that the gospel on uncircumcision was committed to St. Paul, and that the gospel of circumcision was entrusted to Peter. (*Gal. ii. 7.*) *2dly*, That St. Paul had the care of all the churches. (*2 Cor. xi. 28.*) *3dly*, That he was " nothing behind the other apostles" (*ib. xii. 11*); that he withstood Peter to the face (*Gal. ii. 11*); that Peter and John were sent by the apostles to Samaria (*Acts viii. 14*); that Peter also gave an account of his own conduct to the other apostles. (*ibid. xi.*) To these testimonies of scripture, we may add the testimony of christian antiquity, whence it would appear that both Peter and Paul were joint founders of the Church of Rome, and that, consequently, no marked pre-eminence was conferred on Peter.

CATHOLIC.—When St. Paul says that the gospel of circumcision was allotted to Peter, and that of uncircumcision to himself, he speaks solely of the division of labour assigned to each, without touching, in the least, the question of jurisdiction. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that the conversion of the Gentiles was first revealed to Peter, and that he actually began to preach in consequence of the vision (*Acts x.*); and of Paul it is said, that he preached in the synagogues, and confounded the Jews. (*ib. ix. 20-22.*) The division of labour, therefore, assigned to each, by no means

intrenches on the supremacy of jurisdiction conferred on the head of the sacred college.

When St. Paul says that he is burthened with the care of all the churches, he speaks of the general and ample commission given by Christ "to all his apostles, to teach all nations"; but he who gave this ample authority by no means cancelled his own declaration, by which he constituted Peter the head. The apostles received from Christ an ample authority of preaching and teaching every where; still, according to his ordination, such authority was to be exercised with due subordination to Peter, in whom he placed the centre of all authority.

When St. Paul says that he is not inferior to any of the apostles, he evidently refers to his apostolic labours, which he had enumerated, and to the indefatigable zeal which he had displayed.

If St. Paul withstood Peter in the instance referred to, the only inference to be drawn from the fact is, that a superior may be corrected with propriety by an inferior, in a matter of importance. "Here," says St. Augustine, writing to St. Jerome, "is exhibited the praise of a justifiable liberty in Paul, and an instance of holy humility in Peter." (*Ep. 82. al. 19.*) Here it should be observed, that St. Paul withstood Peter, not for having taught the faithful any error in matters of faith, but only for an individual fault in his conversation with the Jews.

If Peter and John were sent to Samaria, that circumstance argues no inferiority on the part of the persons thus sent; but proves only a confidential communication between the parties deliberating in one general concern.

St. Peter gave an account of his own conduct for the information of the ignorant, and to explain

the nature of an extraordinary commission received from above.

It is assuredly agreeable to truth, to affirm that St. Paul co-operated with St. Peter in founding the Church of Rome ; that he was connected with him by a cordial participation of his labours during life ; that he was joined with him in death ; and that, consequently, the names of these two illustrious apostles are frequently united. Though this be a correct statement of the case, yet, in no monument of christian antiquity is the See of Rome denominated *the see of Paul* only ; but in innumerable instances it is designated *the see of Peter*. And this is a striking proof that the association of the name of Paul with that of Peter was *never* understood to impair that supremacy which our Redeemer had conferred on the head of the sacred college.

SEVENTH DIALOGUE.

PROTESTANT.—Supposing that Christ really conferred on St. Peter a decided pre-eminence of honor and jurisdiction, by constituting him the corner-stone of his building, how can it be proved that this primacy was transmitted to the successors of St. Peter?

CATHOLIC.—Most satisfactory and very forcible reasons, particularly from the testimony of the ancient Church, are not wanting to prove this. If our Redeemer judged it proper to appoint a head over his Church, in the person of St. Peter, in order to remove the occasion of disunion, agreeably to the doctrine of St. Jerome, the same reason not only subsists in its full force during the subsequent ages of the Church, but also acquires a tenfold weight. What was expedient during the period of fervour, when a general spirit of piety, humility and religion prevailed, must be deemed altogether indispensable when this spirit relaxed. Further, if the Church of Christ must always be one, she cannot be subject to any substantial change, and, consequently, she will preserve, until the end of the world, that form of ecclesiastical government which Christ deemed proper, from her commencement, to establish for the preservation of her unity.

If we consult the earliest monuments of christian antiquity, and ascertain the real doctrine of the Church from her general councils, we cannot entertain a shadow of doubt that the successors of St. Peter filling the See of Rome have always possessed and lawfully exercised the primacy of honor and jurisdiction over the whole Church of Christ.

The council of Sardica, in 347, in the synodical

epistle to Pope Julius, says : " It will appear best, and most proper, if the priests of the Lord do refer to the headship, the chair of Peter the apostle, respecting each province, and all provinces whatever."

In the second general council, held at Constantinople in 381, the fathers addressed a letter to Pope Damasus, in which they distinctly declare that they assembled in consequence of a requisition addressed to them by the Apostolic See, and " acknowledge the summons addressed to members belonging to their head." (*Hist. Eccles. Theodoret. lib. 5. cap. 9.*)

In the third general council, held at Ephesus in 431, the fathers thus pronounce against Nestorius : " Compelled by the sacred canons, and the epistle of our most holy father and fellow minister, Celestine, bishop of the Roman Church, bathed in tears, we are reduced of necessity to pronounce this mournful sentence against him." (*Act 1.*) The fact of the fathers admitting themselves to be compelled by the Pontiff, must, consequently, imply that they acknowledge a special authority in him. In the second act, or session, Philip, one of the Pope's legates, spoke in these terms : " We give thanks to this holy and venerable synod, that after the letters of our holy and blessed Pope were read to you, you expressed your joyful feelings to your holy head by acclamation. For you are not ignorant that the blessed apostle Peter is the head of all the faithful, even of the apostles." The same legate spoke more explicitly on this subject, in the third act. There is no doubt," says he, " indeed it is known in all ages, that the holy and most blessed Peter, prince and chief of the apostles, and the pillar of faith, and the foundation of the Catholic Church, received from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind,

the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and that the power of binding and loosing was given to him; who, down to this time, and always, lives and exercises judgment in his successors. Hence, our holy and most blessed Pope Celestine, who is the successor in order, and holds the place of Peter, has sent us to this synod to supply his presence." Juvenal, patriarch of Jerusalem, spoke thus, in the fourth act: "It was the duty of John, the most reverend bishop of Antioch, considering this holy, and great, and general synod, to come without delay, and clear himself of those things which are laid to his charge, before the Apostolic See of Rome, which is with us here; and to shew obedience, and to do honor to the apostolic, holy Roman Church of God, by which the church of Antioch must be directed and judged, as custom, derived from the apostolic rule and tradition, requires."

In the council of Chalcedon, held in 451, Paschasinus, one of the legates of the Supreme Pontiff, spoke as follows: "Of the most blessed and apostolic man, Pope of the city of Rome, which is the chief of all the churches, we hold the precepts in our hand, in which he vouchsafes to ordain that Dioscorus, bishop of Alexandria, do not take his seat in council, but be admitted to speak. Be this of necessity observed; therefore let him depart, or we ourselves go hence." In the second act of the council, after the epistle of St. Leo was read, the fathers of the council exclaimed: "This is the faith of the fathers—the faith of the apostles. Thus we all believe—thus all orthodox christians believe. Anathema to him who does not thus believe. Peter, by Leo, has thus spoken—thus the apostles taught." The fathers having discussed the charges brought against Dioscorus, a sentence of condemnation is pronounced against him, in act

3, by the legates, in the name of the Pope and the council, in these words: "Wherefore, the holy and most blessed Pope Leo, head of the Universal Church, invested with the dignity of the apostle Peter, who is named the foundation of the Church, and the rock of the faith, and the keeper of the gate of the kingdom of heaven, hath, by us his legates, with the consent of the holy synod, stripped him (Dioscorus) of his episcopal dignity, and removed him from every sacerdotal function." (*Vide Epist. Sti. Leonis ad Episcopos Galliæ.*) In the sixteenth act, the most reverend bishops said: "From all that has been done, and from the disposition of each individual, we consider that all primacy and chief honor, according to the canons, must be reserved to the most beloved of God, the archbishop of ancient Rome."

In the sixth general council, held at Constantinople in 680, the fathers, in synodical letters to Agatho, which are to be found after the 18th act, thus address the Roman Pontiff: "The most malignant diseases require the more powerful aid; and therefore Christ, our true God, gave a wise physician, your holiness, honored by God, strenuously repelling the contagion of heretical pestilence, and conferring vigour of health on the members of the Church: to thee, therefore, as to the chief bishop of the Universal Church, standing upon the firm rock of faith, we leave what is to be transacted. Having gladly perused the letters of confession, transmitted by your paternal blessedness to our most pious emperor, which we acknowledge as written divinely by the chief head of the apostles, we have by them dispersed the sect of multiplied error that recently sprung up..... We have anathematized the nefarious doctrine of the heretics.....by the decrees first conveyed by your sacred letters concerning them." And farther: "We have announced manifestly

with you the splendid light of the orthodox faith: which we pray your paternal holiness again to confirm by your most honored writings."

In addition to documents so clear and decisive on this subject, it is easy to collect other evidences, no less demonstrative, from the Greek and Latin Fathers, as well as from other ancient writers.

In the first century, St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, the second from St. Peter, thus begins his epistle to the Romans: "Ignatius, to the Church that is sanctified, which presides in the region of the Romans."

In the second century, St. Irenæus, who was instructed by St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John the evangelist, and died in the year 202, thus expresses himself on this subject: "As it would be tedious to enumerate the whole list of successors in all the episcopal sees, I shall confine myself to that of Rome, the greatest and most ancient, and most illustrious Church, founded by the glorious apostles Peter and Paul, receiving from them her doctrine, which was announced to all men, and which, through the succession of her bishops, is come down to us. With this Church, on account of her superior headship, it is necessary that every other Church, that is, the faithful of all countries, be in communion." (*Advers. Hæres.* lib. iii. c. 3.) Tertullian, who flourished near the same period, styles the Roman Pontiff "the high priest, the chief of the bishops." (*Lib. de Pudicitia.*) In the same century, Pope Victor, in order to maintain unity in the Church, insisted on the churches of Lesser Asia conforming to the observance of the Church of Rome, and of other christian churches, respecting the time of celebrating Easter. Several councils, held at Rome, in Palestine, in Gaul, and other places, had unanimously determined the point according to the

Roman custom. Polycrates, and other Asiatic bishops, were determined to adhere to their own custom. Pope Victor at last threatened to cut them off from the communion of the Church. St. Irenæus, in the year 200, wrote a letter to the Pope, in his own name and that of his brethren in Gaul, recommending to him the toleration of the custom for some time longer, and advising him not to cut off so many churches from the body of the Universal Church. But neither the Asiatic bishops, whom Pope Victor had threatened with excommunication, if they refused to comply with his injunction, nor those who endeavoured to dissuade him, through motives of prudence and charity, from carrying his threat into execution, are known to have ever questioned his right to enforce his requisition. What could have given the Pope jurisdiction over the churches of Asia, but the character of supreme pastor of the Universal Church? (See *Euseb. lib. 5, Hist. c. 24; et Epist. Polyc. ad Vict. ibid.*)

In the third century, St. Cyprian, writing to Pope Cornelius, states the improper conduct of certain schismatics, who had gone from Africa to Rome, and says: "After these attempts, having chosen a bishop for themselves, they dare to sail and to carry letters from schismatics and profane men to the chair of Peter, and to the principal Church, whence the sacerdotal unity took its rise, not reflecting that the members of that Church are Romans, whose faith was praised by St. Paul, to whom perfidy can have no access." (*Epist. 59.*) The same holy father, in his 67th epistle, prays Pope Stephen to command the Gallican bishops to eject from their communion Martian, bishop of Arles, who was associated with the Novatians: "Let letters be directed by thee," says he, "into the province of Arles, in virtue of which, Martian being deposed, another may be substituted in his

place." In the same century, the Pope, St. Stephen, condemned the practice of rebaptizing those who had been in due form baptized by heretics. He required that St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, and Firmilianus, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, should conform to the tradition of the Church in that respect, and threatened them with excommunication unless they complied. By what authority did St. Stephen act in this manner, if not by the supreme authority of the Apostolic See, as Firmilianus himself insinuates in his epistle to St. Cyprian? St. Vincent of Lerins thus observes on this subject: "Then Stephen, of blessed memory, bishop of the Apostolic See, made resistance, together with his other colleagues, to the erroneous practice of St. Cyprian....distinguishing himself above the rest by his zeal, and thinking it becoming, I conceive, so much to surpass all others by his exertions in defending the faith, as he was raised above them all by the authority of his see." (*Commonit.* 1, cap. 5.) About the year 269, some of the faithful of Alexandria, suspecting St. Dionysius, the patriarch of that see, of entertaining opinions against the consubstantiality of the Son of God, laid an accusation against him before St. Dionysius, the Pope at that time. The Pope called upon the patriarch to give to him an account of his faith. The patriarch cleared himself by the letter which he accordingly wrote to refute the charge and defend his character. St. Athanasius bears testimony to this fact, in his book on the synods of Rimini and Seleucia. Why did the Catholics of Alexandria lay their charge against their patriarch before the Pope? Why did the patriarch of Alexandria submit to justify himself before the Pope, but because they acknowledged in his see a superior tribunal and jurisdiction even over the patriarchs of the east?

In the fourth century we have the learned Greek historian, Eusebius, explaining in clear terms the ground of the Roman Pontiff's claim to superior authority, which he derives from St. Peter. (*Euseb. Chron.* an. 44.) We have also the great champion of orthodoxy and patriarch of the second see in the world, St. Athanasius, calling the see of Rome "the mother and head of all the churches." (*Epist. ad Marc.*) This saint being expelled from his see by the Arians, Pope Julius cited him and his enemies before the tribunal of the Apostolic See. "He came," says the Pope, in his celebrated epistle to the Eusebians, "not of his own accord, but after he was sent for, and had received our letters..... But why was not particular information communicated to us concerning the church of Alexandria? Do you not know that it is the custom for the case to be first laid before us in writing, in order that from hence a just decision may be sent? Certainly, if any such suspicion were entertained against the bishop of that see, it should have been communicated to this Church.....The rule which I give you, is that which we have received from the blessed Peter, and I believe it to be so well known to every body that I should not have mentioned it, had I not been thrown into such a state of anxiety by what has taken place." From this letter of Pope Julius, it clearly appears that St. Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria, obeyed the citation of the Pope; that what the Pope did on this occasion was not a novel act, but an ancient custom; and that, in following it, he proceeded according to the rule of government received from St. Peter. The same Pontiff, in the year 341, by his apostolical authority, restored the said St. Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria, Paul, bishop of Constantinople, Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, Asclepas, bishop of Gaza, and Lucius, bishop of Adrianople, to their sees, of

which they had been deprived by the Arians. Of this proceeding, Sozomen, an historian of the fifth century, writes in the following words: "When the bishop of Rome had heard the accusation against them, and had found that these bishops all adhered to the faith of the council of Nice, he received them into his communion. And as, by the dignity of his see, he was charged with the care of all, he reinstated each one in his own respective church." (*Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. c. 7.) The same thing is related by Socrates, who lived in the same century. "Athanasius," says he, "Paul, Asclepas, Marcellus, and Lucius, went to Rome, and exposed their case to Julius, bishop of that city. He, by virtue of the prerogative of his see, sending them with letters, urgent and energetic, to the bishops in the east, restored each of them to his respective see." (lib. ii. c. 15.) It was by the supreme authority and prerogative of the See of Rome, that this jurisdiction was exercised over bishops and patriarchs, in Asia and in Egypt. Even a heathen writer, of the fourth age, says that the principle authority of christians is placed in the Roman bishop. (*Ammian. Marcellin.* lib. xv. c. 7.) Hence arose, in the distant provinces of the empire, a confusion of names, similar to that now existing among the populace of England; for the heathens of Gaul used to call the christians *Romans*. Thus, the pagan king Theodegisilus thought to account for a miracle, by saying: "It is the invention of the Romans, not the virtue of God." St. Gregory of Tours adds here, in a parenthesis: "They call Romans the members of our religion." (*Greg. Turon. Miracul.* lib. i. c. 25.) In the same century, Constantine the Great, speaking of the city of Rome, says: "Where the prince of priests and the head of the Christian Religion was constituted by the Celestial Emperor, it is

not just that there an earthly emperor should have power." (cap. *Constantinus*, d. 96.)

In the beginning of the fifth century we have St. Augustine, who in the clearest terms teaches the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff over the whole Church. "In the Roman Church," says the holy doctor, "the principality of the apostolic chair ever flourished." (*Epist.* 162.) "I am held," says he in another place, "in the Catholic Church by an uninterrupted succession of pastors from St. Peter, to whom our Lord consigned the feeding of his flock after his resurrection, to the present Pontiff." (*Cont. Epist. Fundam.* cap. 4.) When the council of Milevum, in Africa, had, in 416, condemned the Pelagian errors, St. Augustine wrote a letter to Pope Innocent I. in the name of the council, in these words: "Since the Lord, by the signal gift of his grace, has placed you in the Apostolic See, and, in our times, has exhibited such a character in your person, that it will be rather imputed to our negligence than to any haughtiness or neglect of duty on your part, if we do not expose to your holiness what seems necessary for the good of the Church; we, therefore, beseech you to give your pastoral attention to the dangers of the weak members of Christ. A new héresy, a pernicious tempest, has been raised by the enemies of the grace of Christ, who are endeavouring, by their impious discourses, to deprive us of the blessing we implore in the Lord's Prayer....But we think that, with the merciful aid of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is pleased to direct you, when you apply to him for counsel, and to grant your petitions, those who entertain these perverse and pernicious doctrines will yield to the authority of your holiness, which is derived from the authority of the holy scriptures." (*Epist.* 92, *ad Innoc. I.*)

Even among the most distinguished Protestants there have been some who acknowledged the supremacy of St. Peter and his successors in the Roman See over all the Church, as a fact supported by the concurring testimony of the ancient Church. "We confess," says Bucer, who was called over to England to assist Cranmer in forming the Anglican Church, "that, in the opinion of the ancient Fathers, the Roman Church did hold the primacy, having the chair of Peter, and that her bishops have been accounted his successors." (*Bucer, Prep. ad Conc.*) "Rome," says Blondel, a Protestant divine, "being a church consecrated by the residence of St. Peter, whom antiquity acknowledged as the head of the apostolic college, and honored as the see of Peter, might easily have been considered by one of the most renowned councils (that of Chalcedon) as head of the Church." (*Blondel on the Supremacy*, p. 107.)

To be the better convinced of this truth, that the successors of St. Peter, filling the Apostolic See of Rome, always possessed and exercised a real supremacy over all the Church of Christ, I solicit your attention to the four following considerations.

1. Whenever a bishop, in any part of the Catholic world, has felt himself aggrieved by the procedure of a national or provincial synod, he has had recourse invariably to Rome. Thus, when Eustathius, bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia, had been condemned and deposed by a council of Arians, held at Melitina in 360, he appealed to Pope Liberius. The Pope restored him to his see, after he had complied with the proposals made to him. Eustathius produced the letters of the Pope, before the bishops assembled in council at

Tyana, in Cappadocia; and, consequently, without questioning the authority of Pope Liberius, he was put in possession of his church. This is stated by St. Basil the Great, in his 74th letter to the western bishops on Eustathius of Sebaste. In the same century, St. Dionysius of Alexandria, accused of heresy, justified himself before the Roman Pontiff, as St. Athanasius relates. (*Lib. de Synodis Arimini et Seleuciæ.*) Theodoret, an Asian bishop, in a letter to Pope Leo, says: "I await the sentence of your Apostolic See; and I supplicate and conjure your holiness to assist one appealing to your just and right judgment."

In the year 403, St. John Chrysostom, patriarch of Constantinople, was unjustly condemned and deposed, by a synod of thirty-six bishops, held in a church at Chalcedon, called the "Synod of the Oak," where Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria, presided. St. John Chrysostom wrote to Pope Innocent I. entreating him to declare null and void all that had been done, as no injustice could be more notorious. His letter to the Pope is conceived in these words: "Write, I pray, and by your authority annul these iniquitous acts, done in my absence, and without any refusal on my part to submit to a lawful tribunal. Subject the authority of these proceedings to the censures of the Church. Send your orders, that I, who am innocent, who am not convicted, nor found guilty of any crime, may be restored to my church." (*Epist. 1, ad Innoc. I.*) Surely this appeal from St. John Chrysostom, the most illustrious patriarch of Constantinople, to the Pope, is a strong testimony of the authority of the tribunal of the Apostolic See, and of the superior jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff over all the Church of Christ. Ecclesiastical history is full of

similar appeals. In such instances, the cases submitted to the Holy See were carefully investigated, and judiciously discussed; and the adverse parties manifested full and entire acquiescence in the authority of the judge.

2. In all controversies relating to faith, the party adhering to the Apostolic See has ever been accounted orthodox—the party dissenting from the Supreme Pastor has been reputed, in every instance, heretical or schismatical. St. Jerome, seeing a division in the church of Antioch, and not knowing to whom to adhere, wrote two letters to Pope Damasus, consulting him how he ought to act. In the first he says: “I am joined in communion with your holiness, that is, with the chair of Peter. Upon that rock I know the Church is built. Whoever eats the lamb out of that house is profane. Whoever is not in the ark, shall perish in the deluge....Whoever gathers not with you, scatters: he who is not Christ’s, belongs to antichrist....Order me, if you please, what I shall do.” Not receiving a speedy answer, St. Jerome wrote a second letter, conjuring his holiness to answer his difficulties, and not despise a soul for which Jesus Christ died. “On one side,” he says, “the Arian fury rages, supported by the secular power; on the other side, the church (at Antioch) being divided into three parts, each would needs draw me to itself. All the time I cease not to cry out, Whoever is united to the chair of Peter, he is mine.” (See *Epist. 15 et 16, ad Damasum.*) Writing to Demetriade he says: “Always remain united in heart and mind in communion with the chief of the Roman Church; and however prudent, however firm in good faith you may believe yourself to be, never lend an ear to any man who would speak to you of a faith which is not that of St.

Peter, of whom the existing Pope is the true and only successor." (*Epist. ad Demet.*) Writing against Rufinus, he asks him: "Is our faith that of the Roman Church, or is it that contained in the books of Origen? If he answer, it is Roman, then we are Catholics." (*Advers. Rufin. lib. i.*) "Where Peter is," writes St. Ambrose, "there is the Church: where the Church is, there is no death, but eternal life, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (In *Psalm 40.*)

St. Augustine, writing against the Donatists, says to them: "Come, brethren, if you would be ingrafted in the vine. 'Tis a pity to see you lie in this manner lopped off from the stock. Reckon up the prelates in the very See of Peter; and in that order of fathers see which has succeeded. The Roman Chair is the rock, which the proud gates of hell do not conquer." (In *Psalm. contra partem Donati.*)

3. Nothing has ever been defined in the Church relating to faith without the consent, or the subsequent sanction, of the Pope as the supreme pastor. St. Ambrose, in his 78th epistle, admonishes Theophilus to transmit his decision on the dissensions in the church of Antioch to the Roman Pontiff, alleging, that without his authority it would be useless. On the occasion of the Pelagian heresy being condemned by the Pope, St. Augustine said: "Concerning this cause (the Pelagian heresy) the decrees of two councils (namely, of Carthage and Milevum) were transmitted to the Apostolic See: thence rescripts are arrived—the cause is ended. Would that the heresy may also at last have an end!" (*St. August. serm. 131, alias 2, de verbis Apost. No. 10.*)

4. There is no period in which the Roman

Pontiffs have not exercised supreme power in religious matters. For eighteen hundred years, whilst every country under heaven has exhibited incessant changes and continual fluctuations, the Apostolic See, the Chair of Peter, has preserved an unbroken succession of Pontiffs, who, during the whole of this period, have governed the Church, superintended the canonical observances, repressed abuses, decided controversies on subjects of faith and morality, summoned councils, presided over them by their legates, subsequently sanctioned their proceedings, and exercised the primacy of honor and jurisdiction no less over the pastors than over the faithful. Hence, St. Bernard, so deeply instructed in the faith of all preceding ages, speaks as follows to Pope Eugenius: "Come let us examine who thou art, and what person thou bearest for a time in the Church of God. Who art thou? A great priest, a great pontiff. Thou art the prince of bishops; the heir of the apostles; in primacy thou art Abel, in government Noah, in patriarchate Abraham, in order Melchisedech, in dignity Aaron, in authority Moses, in jurisdiction Samuel, in power Peter, in unction Christ.....Thou art he to whom the keys are delivered and the sheep entrusted. Others, indeed, are the warders of heaven's gate and shepherds of the flock: but thou hast inherited, above all others, a name so much the more glorious as it is the more distinct. They have assigned to them a particular flock: to thee all are entrusted, to one the whole; not only of the sheep, but of the shepherds themselves, thou art the one shepherd. Whence my proof, askest thou? From the word of the Lord. To which, not of the bishops, I ask, but of the apostles, were the sheep absolutely and indiscriminately confided? 'If thou lovest me, Peter, feed my sheep.' What sheep? The people of this or that

kingdom or region? 'My sheep,' he says. Is it not clear that he designated not some, but assigned all? Where there is no distinction there is no exception. Therefore, according to thy canons, others are called to a portion of solicitude, thou to the plenitude of power. The power of others is confined within prescribed limits, *thine* extends to those who have received power over others. Canst thou not, if there be cause, close heaven against a bishop, depose him from his episcopacy, and deliver him over to the power of satan? Thy privilege, in the delivered keys, as with the sheep, stands unshaken." (*Lib. 2 de Consideratione*, c. viii.)

The supreme jurisdiction exercised by the Popes in the Church of Christ, in every century, was not derived from the concession of bishops, much less from the grants of emperors or princes; but it was a jurisdiction derived from Christ, as St. Augustine and the African bishops assembled at Milevum declared; it was a supreme judicial and governing authority which descended to the Bishops of Rome in succession from St. Peter, who lives and exercises judgment in his successors, according to the sentiments expressed at the council of Ephesus.

EIGHTH DIALOGUE.

PROTESTANT.—I perceive, very clearly, that the Papal supremacy, far from being contrary to the sacred scriptures and to the doctrine of the ancient Church, as Protestants affirm, is demonstrated and supported by them. Now, I wish to know exactly, who are the real pastors of the Church of Christ, namely, such pastors as constitute that external and infallible authority which Christ appointed in his Church for preserving and teaching his doctrine to mankind until the end of the world.

CATHOLIC.—Having seen who is the Head of the Church of Christ, it will be no arduous task to discover who are the real pastors of his Church, to whom he promised his assistance and the light of his Holy Spirit even to the consummation of ages. The Roman Pontiff being the head of Christ's Church, is, of course, the head of all the pastors and faithful belonging to her; consequently, the true pastors of the Church of Christ are they who adhere to the Pope, and hold communion with him as with the successor of St. Peter and the head of the Church of Christ. It is they who constitute that external and infallible authority, which will continue in the Church of Christ until the end of the world.

The supreme authority, which is fixed in the See of Peter, is the central power, which, by its splendour and influence, imparts light and motion to the other subordinate ecclesiastical authorities, and connects all the parts of the Church in close union together, as one regular and harmonious edifice. Every ecclesiastical power that breaks asunder its connexion with this centre of unity,

ceases to belong to the heavenly building; it becomes a wandering star (*Jude* i. 13) moving in devious tracts, and growing more and more obscure and languid as it recedes further from the central source of its light and action.

"The idea of the Papal supremacy," writes the Right Rev. Dr. Wiseman, "involves two distinct, but closely allied prerogatives: the first is, that the Holy See is the centre of unity; the second, that it is the foundation of authority. By the first is signified, that all the faithful must be in communion with it through their respective pastors, who form an unbroken chain of connexion from the lowliest member of the flock to him, who has been constituted its universal shepherd. To violate this union and communion constitutes the grievous crime of schism, and destroys an essential constitutive principle of Christ's Religion. We likewise hold the Pope to be the source of authority; as all the subordinate rulers in the Church are subject to him, and receive, directly or indirectly, their jurisdiction from and by him. Thus, the executive power is vested in his hands for all spiritual purposes within her; to him is given the charge of confirming his brethren in the faith; his office is to watch over the correction of abuses and the maintenance of discipline throughout the Church; in case of error springing up in any part, he must make the necessary investigations to discover it, and condemn it; and either bring the refractory to submission, or separate them, as withered branches, from the vine. In case of great and influential disorder in faith or practices, he convenes a general council of the pastors of the Church; presides over it in person, or by his legates; and sanctions, by his approbation, its canons or decrees." (*Lecture 8, on the Supremacy of the Pope.*)

Hence, it is clear what is to be understood by the Roman Catholic Church. By such Church is signified, not only that portion of bishops and faithful living within the Roman territory subject to the Roman Pontiff, but the whole body of christians, whether pastors or laity, who, spread through all the world, adhere to the Pope as the successor of St. Peter, and, consequently, as Vicar of Christ and visible head of his Church. The bishops adhering to the Roman Pontiff constitute, with him, the true legitimate pastors of the Church of Christ.

PROTESTANT.—In whom, then, does the infallibility properly reside ?

CATHOLIC.—In the body of the pastors joined with their head.

PROTESTANT.—How so ?

CATHOLIC.—In either of these two ways :—

1st, When the pastors of the Church are summoned together by the Chief Pastor in a general council to decide any point of religion, whether regarding faith or morality, they are then infallible in their decisions, and their decrees are then held to be dictated by the Holy Ghost, as in the case of the apostles in their council at Jerusalem, who begin their decrees with these words: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." (*Acts* xv. 28.)

2dly, When the head of the Church, without calling together the other pastors, publishes any decree concerning faith or morality, and this decree is accepted and received by the body of the pastors, either expressly or tacitly, it then becomes a de-

eree of the whole Church, and of the same infallible authority as if it had been made in a general council.

As to these two points there is no question amongst Catholics, but all agree in admitting and believing them as articles of faith.

PROTESTANT.—When the head of the Church publishes any decree concerning faith or morality, to which he requires submission from all the faithful, is he himself infallible in what he teaches?

CATHOLIC.—It is a disputed point, which has never yet been expressly decided by the Church.

PROTESTANT.—On what basis do those divines found their opinion, who believe that the Pope himself, when he speaks to all the faithful as head of the Church, is infallible in matters of faith and morality?

CATHOLIC.—On several very cogent arguments, founded on scripture, tradition, and reason. The arguments founded on scripture are the following:—

1. Jesus Christ (*Matth.* xvi.) declares that the spiritual edifice of his Church is to be indefectible and immoveable until the consummation of ages. St. Peter, therefore, and his successors in the ministry, who are the foundation of the Church of Christ, are to be infallible in teaching the faithful the real doctrine of truth; for how could the Church be firm and immoveable until the end of the world, if her foundation could ever fail?

“Though not said expressly, yet it is true,” says Origen, commenting on this place, “that the gates

of hell shall never be able to prevail, either against Peter or against the Church; for, if they could prevail against Peter, on whom the Church is founded, they would also prevail against the Church." (In *Matth. xvi.*) "Could Peter be ignorant," asks Tertullian, "who was called the foundation-stone of the Church, to whom were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the power of binding and loosing upon earth?" (*De Præscrip. cap. xxii.*) St. Epiphanius calls St. Peter's chair "the solid rock upon which is built the Church of Christ, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail." (In *Anchorato.*) "Since Peter," remarks St. Leo, "heard from our Lord's lips, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church,' who, unless antichrist or the demon, would dare strike against the inexpugnable truth?" (*Epist. 75 ad Leonem August.*) Lastly, the angelic doctor St. Thomas, who, for his erudition and sanctity, is justly ranked among the brightest luminaries of the Catholic Church, thus writes on the subject: "Christ does not express whether the gates of hell will not prevail against Peter, on whom he builds the Church, or against the Church itself, which he builds upon Peter, yet manifest it is, that neither against Peter nor against the Church will they prevail." (In *Catena.*)

"Our Saviour does not merely say," remarks the Right Rev. Dr. Wiseman, commenting on the words of Christ, "that Peter is the rock whereon the Church is to be founded, but moreover, that, *in consequence* of this foundation, this Church is to be impregnable and immoveable. 'Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' I say, that this sentence evidently implies, that the Church is to be imperishable, *in consequence* of this foundation upon Peter; because the connexion between the two ideas, of a

firm foundation and a durable building, is so close and natural, that the usages of language oblige us to consider them as brought together only in consequence of that connexion. To prove this by a familiar instance. When our Saviour says, that the foolish man 'built his house upon sand, and the floods came, and the wind blew and beat upon that house, and it fell,' (*Matth. vii. 27*), we instantly conclude, though it be not expressly said, that the easy fall of that house is meant to be attributed to the instability of its foundation. In like manner, we should have attributed the firmness of that of the wise builder to the circumstance mentioned, that it was founded upon a rock, even though our Saviour had not himself expressly given the same reason. (*ib. v. 25.*) In our instance, therefore, as the Church of God is said to be founded upon Peter as upon a rock, and, at the same time, is declared to be proof against the powers of destruction, so we may conclude, that this security from ruin is the natural consequence of its being so founded." (*Lecture 8th, on the Supremacy of the Pope.*) But how could Peter be the real support of the Church of Christ, which will last for ever, were he and his successors not endowed with the gift of infallibility in matters of faith?

2. Peter, and his successors in the ministry, having received from Christ the charge of feeding his flock (*John xxi.*), namely, all the members of his Church, are obliged to teach the faithful the real identical doctrine of Christ until the consummation of ages. But how could they comply with this charge were they not gifted with infallibility in matters of faith?

"The spiritual sheep," says St. Agatho in his first letter to the emperor Constantine Pogonato,

which was read and accepted by the fathers of the sixth general council, in act 18, "Peter received the commission to feed by a triple commendation from the Redeemer, on whose guardianship resting this his Apostolic Church, has never deflected from the way of truth into any shade of error. This is the true rule of faith, which equally in prosperous as adverse events, she hath truly observed and defended. This is the spiritual mother of thy most tranquil empire, the Apostolic Church of Christ, which is proved by the grace of the omnipotent God never to have wandered from the pathway of apostolic tradition, nor fallen depraved by heretical innovations."

3. Our Saviour, seeing the rage of satan against his disciples, prayed for St. Peter in particular, that his faith should not fail, and then commissioned him as the head to confirm his brethren. (*Luke xxii. 31.*) This prayer of Christ, that the faith of Peter should never fail, was certainly not disregarded by his Heavenly Father, because the prayer of Christ was always heard by his Father, according to these words: "Father, I give thee thanks that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always." (*John xi. 41-42.*) St. Peter, therefore, as head of the Church, and, consequently, his successors in the ministry, shall never fail in faith, so as to teach false doctrines to the faithful entrusted to their care. This infallibility is necessary for fulfilling well the charge given to them of confirming others in faith; for how can they confirm others in truth unless they themselves be quite firm and immoveable therein? Neither does the subsequent fall of Peter, in denying his master, weaken in the slightest degree this argument, but rather corroborates it; for it shows that the promise of our Saviour, that Peter's faith

should not fail, was made to him, not as a private person, but as the head of the Church, and therefore, to be uninterruptedly fulfilled in all his successors. It should also be observed, that such promise made to Peter, like the other promises made to the Church, was not to be fulfilled till the coming of the Holy Ghost, who was sent expressly to establish the Church, and accomplish all the promises Christ made to her, and, therefore, to abide with her for ever.

“Let your clemency consider,” thus writes St. Agatho, in his first letter to the emperor Constantine, “how the Lord and Saviour of all, who promised that the faith of Peter should not falter, admonished him to confirm his brethren, which is manifest that the apostolical Pontiffs, the predecessors of my lowliness, have confidently done.” St. Thomas, treating the question whether it belongs to the Pope to propose the symbol of faith, says: “The drawing up of the symbol of faith belongs to the authority of him to whose authority appertains the determination of those tenets which are of faith, that they may be held by all with unshaken firmness. But this belongs to the authority of the chief Pontiff, to whom the more important and difficult questions are referred. Whence our Lord said to Peter, whom he constituted sovereign Pontiff: ‘I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren.’ And the reason of this is, that the faith of the whole Church must be one, according to St. Paul (1 *Cor.* i. 10): ‘Now I beseech you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no schism among you.’ Which unity could not be preserved, unless questions of faith were to be determined by him who presides over the whole Church, that his decree may be

firmly held by the whole Church. And, therefore, the drawing up of a symbol, or whatever else concerning the Universal Church, as, for instance, the assembling a general council, &c., belongs to the sovereign Pontiff." (2. 2. q. 1. art. 10.)

The language of all antiquity, on this subject, is indeed remarkably striking.

1. In the council of Ephesus (*Act 3*), Philip, priest and legate of the Apostolic See, without meeting any opposition from the fathers concerning the authority and stability in the faith transmitted by St. Peter to his successors, styles the Roman Pontiff the *column of faith* and *foundation of the Catholic Church*.

2. The council of Chalcedon styles the sovereign Pontiff the *rock and foundation of the Church* and *the basis of the true faith*. (*Act 3*.)

3. The fathers of the sixth general council, writing to Agatho, style him "the chief bishop of the Universal Church, *standing upon the firm rock of faith*."

4. In the formula of Adrian II., which the eighth general council adopted, it is said: "The sentence of our Lord Jesus Christ, saying 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church,' cannot be overlooked. These words are corroborated by facts; for in the Apostolic See has religion ever been preserved immaculate, and her doctrine celebrated.....Following in all things the Apostolic See.....in which is the entire and true solidity of the christian religion, we hope," &c. (*Act 1*.) In the same act, the holy fathers call "separated from the communion of the Catholic Church, those who do not consent entirely with the Apostolic See."

Do not these words of the holy fathers contain an implicit declaration of the infallibility of the Holy See ?

5. The fathers of the council of Florence thus expressed their belief in the authority of the Apostolic See : " We define, that the holy Roman See, and the Roman Pontiff, holds the primacy over the whole world, and that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of St. Peter, prince of the apostles and true vicar of Christ, and the head of the whole Church, and the father and doctor of christians ; and that to him, in St. Peter, was given by our Lord Jesus Christ full power to feed, rule, and govern the universal Church, as appears from the proceedings of general councils, and holy canons." (*last Session.*) But how could the Roman Pontiff be the father and doctor of the Universal Church, were he not infallible in teaching the faithful the doctrine of Christ ? Would not the Universal Church be in continual danger of falling into error, if the Roman Pontiff, by whom she is to be taught, could ever swerve from the doctrine of truth ?

6. The same is the doctrine of the fathers and doctors of the Church. St. Irenæus confutes all heresies and all false doctrines by the authority of the Holy See : " By declaring," he says, " the tradition and faith of that Church, which she received from the apostles, and has handed down to our days." (*Advers. Hæres. lib. iii. c. 3.*) " Perfidy," writes St. Cyprian, " can have no access to the Roman See." (*Epist. 59, ad Cornel.*) St. Peter Chrysologus, in his letter to Eutyches, which is inserted in the first part of the council of Chalcedon, says : " In all things we exhort thee that thou obediently attend to whatever the blessed Pope of the Roman City has written, since St.

Peter, who lives and presides in his own see, teaches the truth of faith to those who seek after it. St. Jerome, in the exposition of the symbol to Pope Damasus, says: "This is the faith, most holy father, which we have learnt in the Catholic Church, and which we have always held; in which, if there be perchance any point not wisely or not circumspectly set down, we would have the same amended by thee, who holdest the faith and the chair of Peter: but if otherwise, our confession be approved in the judgment of thy apostleship, whoever has the boldness to censure me will prove himself either ignorant or malevolent, or even not a Catholic, and not me a heretic." St. Leo writes: "That Christ constituted St. Peter head of his Church, that the light of truth might be extended from him to all the world." (*Serm. de sanct. apost. Pet. et Paul.*) "And that he placed in St. Peter the centre of that fortitude and firmness which was to be communicated to the other apostles." (*Serm. 3, in anniv. assumpt. suæ ad Pontific.*) Lastly, St. John Chrysostom calls the Roman Pontiff "the incorruptible column of the Church, the basis and foundation of faith." (*Hom. ii. in Psalm. 50.*)

The arguments founded on reason are the following:—

1. The judgment of the Roman Pontiff, in matters of faith, is supreme and ultimate, beyond which there exists no superior tribunal of appeal; therefore it must be infallible. "Peter," writes St. Thomas, "received supreme power from Christ. As Christ received from the Father the sceptre of the Church and the plenitude of power over all that exists, that every thing should bend to him; so indeed did he commit it most fully to Peter, and his successors." (*Opusc. 1, contra Græc. error. c. 32.*)

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St. Leo makes Christ thus address Peter : " I am the foundation, besides which no one can sink another ; still thou also art a rock, being founded on my power, that all things which are mine by authority may be common to thee by participation with me." (*Serm. 3, de assumpt. sua ad Pontific.*) St. Augustine, writing against Julianus, who had appealed from the condemnation of the Supreme Pontiff to a general council, says : " That part of the globe, I think, should satisfy thee, in which the Lord was pleased to crown with a glorious martyrdom the first of the apostles ; the guardian of whose Church, blessed Innocent, hadst thou wished to hear, thou hadst certainly rescued thy perilous youth from Pelagian snares." (*lib. i. c. 4.*) In another place, writing against the same, he says : " Why still seekest thou an examination, since it has been already made at the Apostolic See?" (*Lib. 2, operis imperfecti contra eundem, c. 104.*) Moreover, an appellant is removed (where cause exists) from under the jurisdiction of him against whom he appeals, and retires from his obedience ; but none of the faithful can withdraw from under the jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff, nor depart from his obedience, otherwise he would be no longer a sheep of Christ, nor one of the faithful. " The sacred office of evangelical preaching, God placed in Peter," says St. Leo, " that whoever presumed to depart from the solidity of Peter might understand he was not a partaker of the divine mystery." (*Epist. 89, ad Episcopos Viennenses.*) " Nor do ever heresies arise," says St. Cyprian, " nor schisms spring up, but when men disobey the priest of God, and disbelieve that there is one living priest in the Church, and judge in the place of Christ." (*Epist. 59, ad Cornel.*) " The safety of the Church," writes St. Jerome, " depends on the dignity of the high priest, to whom, unless a considerable and eminent authority were allowed above

"all, there would exist as many schisms as there are priests." (*Contra Luciferianos*, No. 9.)

2. The Apostolic See is the fount to which it behoves us to recur, that the doctrine of faith may be held and preserved immaculate ; therefore it must be infallible. "It behoves us," says St. Cyril of Alexandria, "as members to adhere to our Roman Pontiff, from whom it is our duty to ask what we are bound to believe, what to understand, what to maintain." (*Thesauris*, lib. i. c. 21, No. 4.) In the epistle of three African councils to Pope Theodore, read in the council of Lateran, it is said: "None can doubt but that the river, great and inexhaustible, flowing to all christians, is the fount at the Apostolic See ; whence rivulets copiously flow, irrigating exuberantly the whole christian world." St. Jerome, writing to Demetriades, exhorts her to adhere closely to the faith of St. Peter and his successors in the Apostolic See, in order to continue firm in the real doctrine of truth : and, writing to Rufinus, he considers the profession of such faith a distinguished mark of catholicity.

3. It belongs to the Roman Pontiff to determine, by his decision, the questions of faith ; therefore he is infallible. "The holy Roman Church," the second general council of Lyons declares, "holds chief principality over the Universal Church, which she knows that she received, with plenitude of power, from our Lord himself in the person of blessed Peter, whose successor is the Roman Pontiff ; so that if any questions arise touching faith, they are to be determined by his decision." The same thing was declared in the fifteenth general council, held at Vienna, where Clement V. says, that the declaring of what is of faith "appertains to the Apostolical consideration,"

namely, to the authority of the Roman Pontiff. Hence the angelic doctor St. Thomas, 2. 2. q. xi. art. 2. ad 3, thus writes: "The universal authority of the Church principally resides in the chief Pontiff: for it is said (24. q. 1): 'As often as the reasons of faith are canvassed, I think that reference ought to be made from all our brethren to St. Peter, that is, to the authority of his name; against whose authority neither St. Jerome, nor St. Augustine, nor any of the holy doctors, defends his opinions.' Whence says St. Jerome to Pope Damasus: 'This is the faith, most blessed Pope, which we have learnt in the Catholic Church.'"

4. Every christian is obliged to hear the Apostolic See, namely, to be joined with that See in the unity of faith; because she is the bond of Catholic union, and the centre of Catholic communion. "To this Church," says St. Irenæus, speaking of the Roman Church, "all must have recourse; for apostolical tradition is always preserved in her." (*Advers. Hæres.* lib. iii. c. 3.) "Blessed Peter," writes Venerable Bede, "received the principality of judicial power, that all the faithful throughout the globe might understand that whoever separates in any degree from the unity of his faith or alliance, such can neither obtain the remission of sin, nor enter the gate of heaven." (*Homil. in festo SS. Petri et Pauli.*)

From this obligation, under which all christians are bound to hear the Apostolic See, namely, to be joined with that See in the unity of faith, it follows, that the Roman Pontiff, in teaching the faithful the doctrine of faith, must be infallible; for as, from the command of Christ to hear the Church under pain of being considered as heathens and publicans, it is justly inferred, that the Church can never deviate from truth; so, from the obligation under which we are bound of hearing the

Apostolic See, and being united with her in matters of faith, the inference that she cannot fall into error is manifest.

5. Vast numbers of heresies, which have appeared at different times in the Church, were proscribed and condemned by the authority of the Pope alone. In the year 150, Cerdon and Valentine were condemned by Higinus. (*Euseb. Hist. lib. i. cap. 10.*) In the year 196, Theodotus was condemned by Victor. (*apud eundem, lib. v. cap. 17.*) In the year 215, the Montanists were condemned by Zephyrinus. (*apud Tertul. lib. de jejun. cap. 1.*) After the council of Nice, in the year 390, Siricius condemned Juvinianus. In the year 401, Anastasius condemned Rufinus the Origenist. In the year 416, Innocent I. condemned Pelagius. And all these were considered heretics by the Pope's verdict alone. Hence, St. Augustine, in the appendix to his book against the two epistles of the Pelagians addressed to Boniface, says: "A synod is not requisite; for many other heresies there are which have been disapproved and condemned by the Roman See, and from thence have they been exposed through distant lands, that they might be avoided." And Leo IX. in the first epistle to Michael Cerularius and Leo Arcidanus, says: "Will, therefore, any one be so insane as to suppose that the word of him, to whom willing and doing are the same, could fail in one single instance? Is it not from the chair of the prince of the apostles, as well by the same Peter as by his successors, that the devices of all heretics have been reprobated and convicted, and beaten down, and the hearts of the brethren confirmed in the faith of Peter, which never yet hath failed, nor will ever fail to the end of time?"

6. Whenever any Pope issued a decree concerning matters of faith and morality, as head of the Church, namely, for all the Catholic world, it was immediately received by the great body of the pastors, as containing the most solid and wholesome doctrine. Such were, for example, the definitions which Innocent I. and Zozimus published against the Pelagians—Celestine I. against Nestorius—Leo I. against Eutyches—Agatho I. against the Monothelites—Leo X. against Luther. These and other similar decrees, which the Pontiffs published for the whole Catholic world, as the universal doctors and pastors of the Church, were immediately received by the great body of the pastors of the Church, who adhered to them with the highest respect and profound veneration.

7. Acts and definitions of councils require the confirmation of the Roman Pontiff before obtaining effectual force in the Universal Church. "May your holiness," thus speak the fathers of the first Nicene council to Pope Silvester, "confirm our statements, that our regulation may have fixed degrees." The fathers of the council of Chalcedon, praying Pope Leo to vouchsafe to confirm by his consent their decrees, say to the same Pontiff, in relation to the synod: "We pray you, therefore, to honour our decisions by your decrees, and as we harmonize with our head in all good, so may your sovereignty complete for your children what is meet." St. Flavian, in his epistle to the same St. Leo, begs of him to confirm the condemnation pronounced by himself and by the council against Eutyches, "which will suffice," says he, "to destroy the heresy." He requests, at the same time, that he would vouchsafe to notify, under his own hand, that the sentence of condemnation has been regularly pronounced against him (Eutyches); "for the cause," says the saint, "demands only your

solution and defence, by which, of your own accord, all things are to be conducted to tranquillity and peace."

8. Among the fathers and doctors of the Church, as well as among the saints who in different ages have been canonized, I doubt if there be a single one who ever taught that the Pope is not infallible : while, on the contrary, there are many who have manifestly advocated his infallibility, as we have seen above.

9. The Papal infallibility has been universally taught in the Church of Christ in every century : whereas the contrary opinion took its rise as recently as the fifteenth century, and has been taught only by some divines of certain particular nations. (See *Ballerini in appendice de infallibil. Rom. Pont.* § xii.)

10. If the judgment of the Chief Pontiff were not infallible in matters of faith, unless after the consent of the bishops, it would follow—1st, That the Sovereign Pontiff borrows, as it were, his infallibility from the bishops, and thus, that the Church is not founded on Peter, but Peter on the Church ; that, instead of Peter feeding the sheep, the sheep feed Peter ; that Peter is not to confirm his brethren in faith, but he is to be confirmed in it by them. 2dly, It would follow that the Chief Pontiff has no more claim to the privilege of infallibility than the bishop of the least diocese ; for the judgment of any bishop, nay of any simple pastor or doctor, is infallible, when supported by the consent of the whole Church. But these consequences are opposed to the doctrine of scripture and tradition ; therefore, the Roman Pontiff is infallible.

PROTESTANT.—Then you think that the Pope

is infallible in the decrees of faith, which he addresses to all christians as their head, and that the other pastors may fall into error?

CATHOLIC.—In the first place, I think that the spirit of truth will remain until the end of the world with the successors of St. Peter, since they are the visible foundation of the Church of Christ, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail, are endued with full power of binding and loosing, and have received the charge of confirming their brethren in the faith. Undoubtedly the Pope is fallible, not only in what concerns his personal conduct, but also in what he teaches as a private doctor, since it has no essential connexion with the Pontifical charge. But I am firmly persuaded, that, acting as the Head of the Church, and the public doctor of all the faithful in matters of faith and morality, he is shielded from the possibility of error, for the reasons that have been stated above. In this case he is said to speak "*ex cathedra*," because he addresses the whole Catholic world, as the head of the Church, seated on the chair of Peter, and teaching therefrom all the faithful intrusted to his care.

Secondly, I think that the spirit of truth will reside for ever with the body of the pastors who adhere to the head of the Church of Christ, namely, the Roman Pontiff; so that, though a part of them may fall into error, yet the whole body never can, Jesus Christ having promised the spirit of truth to St. Peter and his successors in particular, and to the body of the apostles and their successors in general, until the end of the world; consequently, there will ever be in the Church of Christ bishops agreeing with their head, the Roman Pontiff, and stanch in the truth; and thus verifying in themselves the promise of Jesus Christ, that his divine spirit will be with the body of the pastors of his Church until the consummation of ages.

CONCLUSION.

PROTESTANT.—I thank God for the communication of light which he has imparted to me through your instrumentality. The Catholic Church is indeed the Church of Christ, the immaculate Spouse of the Spotless Lamb. How deeply am I indebted to you for the happy change which has been produced in my soul!

CATHOLIC.—Knowing that “every best gift, and every perfect gift is from above, coming from the Father of light” (*James* i. 17), let us praise and glorify God, of “whose mercy there is no number, and of whose goodness the treasure is infinite.” Having approached him with docility of heart, he has not failed to enlighten your understanding and to inflame your will. Hungering and thirsting after justice you have approached him, and he has not failed to feed your soul on the precious invaluable food of truth and heavenly wisdom. If, throughout this our communication, I have caused you a single moment’s pain or displeasure, I make every possible apology, assuring you, at the same time, that my great principle is that of St. Augustine: “Liberty in things doubtful, unity in things essential, and charity in all things.”

PROTESTANT.—Your remarks, it is true, have occasioned, from time to time, some conflicting feelings, and disquietude in my breast; but, thank God, all has tended to my good. It was a passing storm, to which succeeded a sweet calm.

CATHOLIC.—Then you are firmly persuaded of the truth of the Catholic Church?

PROTESTANT.—I am.

CATHOLIC.—But how can you have such a persuasion without having discussed the different questions concerning her sacraments, and other particular points of doctrine, which are held as articles of faith by the Catholic Church?

PROTESTANT.—Being fully convinced of the infallible authority of the Catholic Church, I feel sure that whatever she teaches must be true, however strange and obscure it may appear to our limited and weak understanding. Hence, far from presuming to penetrate, by the faint glimmering light of reason, the tenets proposed by her, I bow down thereto with the more docility and veneration the more impervious and incomprehensible they are to the human understanding. What wonder if the truths revealed by the God of *infinite wisdom* exceed the narrow capacity of our reason? How could such truths be supernatural and calculated to direct man to the supernatural order, were they not above the reach of human understanding? The inquiry to be made by a christian, on this subject, is reducible to this one single point: *What is taught by the Catholic Church?* Knowing this, he need go no farther, but only submit his understanding to her doctrine, with absolute certainty of adhering to the doctrine of truth.

The apostles heard the divine teacher himself, and believed: we hear the same divine teacher, through the pastors of his Church, and we also believe. Our faith rests on his infallible authority, and is delivered to us by those whom he commanded us to believe as himself: "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." (*Luke x.*)

CATHOLIC.—Admirable sentiments, most rational and truly wise ! Let all the faculties of your soul, I repeat again, praise and glorify God for that light which he has bestowed upon you relative to the most important and momentous affair that can engage the human mind ! Having discovered the immoveable foundation of the House of God, you have discovered the solid foundation of truth, of justice, of sanctity, of real solid, infinite and eternal happiness. Superior to the prejudices of education, uninfluenced by human interest, unbiased by the dictates of passion or party feeling, fearlessly and unhesitatingly obey the voice of conviction speaking within your breast—"To-day, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (*Ps.* xciv. 8.)

Permit not grovelling sublunary views, or any earthly motive whatever, to stagger your fortitude and damp your moral energies ; and as the wandering Israelites of the desert directed their course by that column of fire which God sent them for their guidance into the land of promise, so do you follow, during your terrestrial and uncertain pilgrimage through this vale of tears, the pillar and foundation of truth, which our Redeemer has established in his Church to guide us to our heavenly country. Submitting our understanding to the obedience of faith, and adhering closely to the rock of truth, we shall be introduced at length into the region of eternal light, where, seeing God enthroned in glory, we "shall be inebriated with the plenty of his house," (*Ps.* xxxv. 9), and all the hidden mysteries will appear unveiled to us. "It hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like to him, because we shall see him as he is." (1 *John* iii. 2.) "We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face." (1 *Cor.* xiii. 12.)

FINIS.

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